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THE BUILDING OF OUR SOCIAL STRUCTURE

by

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and

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WHAT WE OWE TO THE MIDDLE AGES

WHAT do we owe to the Middle Ages? "Almost everything," asserts the enthusiast. "Almost nothing," rejoins the ultra-modernist. "A very great deal," corrects the careful student of the history of civilization.

The recent centuries have witnessed at least two remarkable changes in the attitude of thoughtful men towards the so-called "Middle Ages." When the Italian and the North European Renaissance blossomed forth after the close of the thirteenth century, the delight of scholars and artists in the recovery of the old Græce-Roman civilization was so great that they became possessed with an unconcealed and angry contempt for nearly everything which had been taught and wrought in the ages following the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The wonderful cathedrals of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries were sneeringly branded as "Gothic," not because the invading tribes of Goths were actually imagined to have built them but because "Gothic" had become a by-word for all that was uncouth, unworthy and barbarous.

When a great part of Western Christendom separated itself from the Catholic Church during the Protestant Reformation, it was inevitable, perhaps, that the people who abruptly threw off the mediæval type of Christianity should look with very scant favor upon the secular culture which had flourished amid what Luther and Calvin branded as "the errors of Rome." Therefore up to about the period of the French Revolution the tendency in very many quarters was one of intense depreciation of the mediæval era as a period not merely of bad art and coarse manners,

but also of such perverted thinking that the modern period owed it little or nothing.

Then naturally enough came the reaction. The devastating confusions of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars dispelled any illusions that bloody deeds and wholesale calamities were a monopoly of the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church, attacked bitterly by the Revolutionists, rallied, displayed an amazing strength and energy, proudly declared that she was not ashamed but extremely proud of her great historic past, and did her best to glorify the same. In Protestant lands also the old tendency asserted itself to "praise the good old times," to look away from the ills of modern Europe, and to see the Middle Ages through a kind of golden haze, where even the brutalities seemed a little less brutal—thanks to the intriguing effects of distance, and when such expressions as "chivalry," "troubadours," "pious hermits," "knightly honor," "beauteous damsels," seemed to imply that somehow in the past, life had been freer, richer, more natural and more joyous than in the troubled, artificial nineteenth century.

This impression (despite a certain explanation of the seamy side of mediæval life) is what has come to thousands of the readers of *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman*. Expressing itself in a multitude of other writers besides Scott, it became a great literary movement known as "Romanticism," which about two generations ago powerfully affected the culture of Europe and even of America.

In the twentieth century it is somewhat fair to say that the older contempt for the Middle Ages is dead, and that the newer "Romantic" enthusiasm has decidedly waned. Protestant scholars can deal with fairness with mediæval theologians. Catholic scholars are willing to admit that in very many material matters the period of Faith and Chivalry was anything but a safe and comfortable epoch. The truth is that we have come to recognize that in the Middle Ages—even as in old Greece and Rome—laws, arts and beliefs may vary, but that one great thing remains immutable—human nature; and the same fundamental things which made men saints or sinners in the Paris of 1900 A. D., made them saints or sinners in the Paris of 1100

A. D. In the Middle Ages men and women sank to the beasts and rose to the angels just as in any other epochs, although (and this is to be frankly admitted) various circumstances made it somewhat more easy to develop the extremes of human iniquity or religious perfection than during certain other periods of history. The one thing certain is that we must judge the folk of the Middle Ages by their own means of enlightenment. If we do that, there will be very few sneers about "mediævalism."

When we ask, however, what the Modern period owes to the Middle Ages, it is only fair of course to declare that we owe the Middle Ages for their best and not for their worst. If the old Roman Empire had lived on without disaster, the time must assuredly have lapsed between, say, 476 A. D. and 1925, but there would have been no mediæval civilization, as we understand it, rising phoenix-like out of the ruins of the ancient civilization. We cannot blame the Middle Ages for transmitting to us certain practices of injustice, cruelty and harsh militarism, for we know that the Roman Empire abounded in injustice, cruelty and harsh militarism. The Middle Ages showed us the bloody and brutal tournaments, but they were infinitely less objectionable than the gladiatorial fights of the wicked old cities of the civilization which they supplanted. Every age is usually entitled to be judged by posterity according to its best and not its worst. Very fortunately it is by no means always true of nations, as Shakespeare declares concerning individuals,

The evil that men do lives after them:
The good is oft interred with their bones.

Athens is usually remembered as the city of the Parthenon and of Platonic philosophy, not as the city that did Socrates to the death. The brutish side of the Middle Ages (and very brutish it was) has now at length fallen away; the great cathedrals and the *Chanson de Roland* are delights forever. We can rejoice in the noble inheritance, even while we sincerely rejoice that we do not have to shiver through bleak winters in the comfortless "halls" of feudal castles, or, even worse, in the filthy peasants'

hovels; or take our chances in lawsuits by ordeals by battle, or, more dubious still, "ordeals by fire or boiling water."

When we deal with the Middle Ages, however, one query becomes needful at the very beginning—what, strictly speaking, *were* the Middle Ages? The textbooks of forty years ago usually chopped universal history into three cross-sections, convenient but arbitrary and rather unscientific: I. *Ancient History*, from earliest Egypt and Babylon to 476 A. D. when Rome was supposed to have "fallen," II. *Medieval History* from 476 A. D. to 1453 when the Turks took Constantinople, and III. *Modern History*, which included everything following 1453.

As a matter of fact, however, there were plenty of "signs of the Middle Ages, i. e., of strange new forces working in the Græco-Roman world, prior to 476 A. D., and indeed reaching well back to the founding of the Roman Empire by Augustus, which is usually put at 27 B. C. On the other hand, competent scholars are dismissing the idea that 476 A. D. represented anything very startling and decisive in European history. In that year there ceased to be any emperor in Italy, and the emperor of Christian Constantinople undertook to manage all of the world which still remained under Roman supremacy: but the "Western Emperors," who then evaporated, had been for decades feeble, transitory folk, clothed with magnificent titles but ordinarily the creatures of their captains-general, who were usually battleworthy Germans. After 476 A. D. these mighty "imperial servants" (who indeed were actually tribal chiefs of the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Franks, etc.) had no longer *titular* superior nearer than Constantinople. But none dared to take to himself the title of "Emperor," and the greatest of them were merely "kings" (*reges*), and quite willing to consider themselves a kind of regents or viceroys for the undoubtedly "Roman" Emperor in Constantinople—provided he did not give obnoxious commands!

Not until 800 A. D., when Charles the Great (Charlemagne), the king of the most successful of these kingdoms—Frankland—was crowned Emperor of the Holy

Roman Empire at Rome, at the personal hands of the Pope, were the sons of the Germanic conquerors in a mood really to recognize what had taken place and cut the last nominal tie that bound them to the true successor of the old Cæsars who still reigned at Constantinople.

On the other hand, the Middle Ages were certainly approaching their close long before Mohammed II and his pashas stormed Constantinople in 1453. The dividing line was probably much nearer 1300. By that time the power of the feudal nobility (which had given to mediæval life its peculiar political character) was rapidly waning before the advancing power of the national kings. And at least two of the great modern nations—France and England—were developing a real national consciousness and character, with forms of government which were to last in France until 1789, and in England unto this present day. During the earlier Middle Ages cities had been few and small, but by 1300 they were numerous and prospering. Earlier, too, there had been only three important classes of people—priests, nobles and toiling peasants; now there were the thrifty merchants and craftsmen of the towns, the burghers of Germany, the bourgeoisie of France.

Along with the rise of this intelligent non-noble class was coming a great intellectual awakening. All but a very few uneasy spirits still held faithfully by the Catholic Church, but in all non-theological matters there was developing an insatiable curiosity and process of inquiry. The scope of human knowledge also was enormously increasing. For example, the master-poet, Dante (1265-1321) was more than the author of an eternal epic, he was a man of vast learning, and by great application and industry he was able apparently to master *all* the science, history and literary lore which his age counted valuable. Dante, however, marked an epoch. His younger contemporary, Petrarch (1304-74), was also a great poet and a great scholar, but by his time the horizon of learning had so increased that no one human brain could compass it. Petrarch was frankly a specialist. He had to confess that mortal limitations forbade him to explore many desirable fields of learning.

So the "Middle Ages," as we find them contributing to the world's heritage, probably began around 800 A. D. and certainly ended soon after 1300 A. D. In fact very few contributions have come to us from the part which lies before 1000 A. D. The famous age of Charlemagne was followed by a distressing reaction almost to barbarism. The so-called "Dark Ages" are not the entire mediæval period; they are especially the epoch running from about 850 to 1000 when the anarchy caused by the feudal nobles was at its worst, when the kings were almost helpless before the power of their so-called "vassals," when even the papacy at Rome seemed in danger of falling into the clutches of the worldly nobility of Latium, and when only in the worthier monasteries did the arts of peace appear to be making a last desperate stand. Great famines swept off the grossly ignorant peasantry, while Norse invaders of France and Hungarian (Magyar) invaders of Germany, not to mention Saracen raiders in Italy, were rendering civilized life almost intolerable.

It is not true (as sundry old histories affirmed) that men at large feared that the year 1000 would witness "the end of the world"; but it is very true that the date 1000 marks roughly a time when there began a great revival of human hope, law, order and civilization. The kings slowly began to reassert themselves and to curb the violence of the feudal nobles. The serfs in the squalid little villages were manumitted in increasing numbers. "Private warfare" began to fall under a discount. A series of great reforming saints and highly capable popes rescued the Church from the slough of despond and made Catholic Christianity an enormously effective force both for religion and for secular civilization.

The first notable expression of this nobler state of things manifested through the Crusades. The First Crusade departed from France in 1096, and from that time until 1270, when the truly saintly Louis IX of France died campaigning against the Infidels, hundreds of thousands of mail-clad pilgrims found their way from Western Europe to Palestine. As a military movement the Crusades of course failed. The attempt to found a strictly

West European feudal kingdom on the very edge of the Moslem Orient was a preposterous undertaking, unless a strong military empire could support it steadily. Nevertheless the Crusaders took Jerusalem in 1099, and their kings of the House of Lorraine reigned there until Saladin's victories in 1187. Even after that, Jerusalem might have been recovered if Richard the Lion-Hearted of England, and Philip Augustus of France had been true allies instead of bickering enemies during the unfortunate Third Crusade (1189-92), and the last "Frankish" fortress in Palestine did not fall back to the Moslems until 1291.

But the Crusades were far more than a passionate and terribly tragic expression of the reviving religious fervor of the Western peoples. The contact with the Orientals and with the cultivated Greek Christians of Constantinople, through whose lands most of the expeditions passed, taught the pilgrims much. Not all the Crusaders left their bones in Syria; many returned to France, Germany and Italy to tell of amazing luxuries and refinements, of silk-weaving, glass-making and metal-working, of the use of paper, of the use of strange fruits and vegetables, and of all the marvelous, half-perverted but in no-wise worthless lore and science of the East.

The Crusades were probably worth even their horrid cost in human lives, thanks to the enormous broadening of the human horizon which they afforded. Doubtless there would have been a great revival of Western civilization between 1100 and 1300 in *any* event, but it was incomparably stimulated by this sustained contact with Eastern peoples, whose own civilization was falling asleep, but who still maintained Constantinople and Bagdad as magnificent cities at an age when London and Paris remained little more than huge wooden villages, with the pigs running about their filthy lanes in lieu of sewers and scavengers.

By the year 1300 it is clear that the men of Western Europe had done far more than simply to recover from the rack and ruin caused by the overthrow of the old Roman Empire. Not merely was the period of painful twilight entirely over, and a day of remarkable achievements in arts, letters, discovery and every other form of worthy en-

deavor at hand, but great and beautiful things for the ennobling of the race had been wrought already. As has been suggested earlier, in the dazzling brilliance of the Renaissance, when men were half-intoxicated at recovering much of the good (and also much of the evil) of pagan Greece and Rome, these contributions by scholars, artists, theologians, and statesmen of a nearer day were often despised and steadfastly ignored. For all that, their value was eternal. The Italian Renaissance with its zest for the ancient "Joy of Life," and then the modern ages with all their long chapters of material conquests did not come merely because in the fourteenth century certain scholars began to recover and turn to account certain very important classical manuscripts. The later ages came because during the storm and welter betwixt the passing of the Ancient World and the dawn of the New Era, *something was added*—added often out of deep agony, centuries of confusion, and desperate gropings after the great riddles of the universe.

Our present civilization rests primarily upon the achievements of Greece and Rome, plus the enormous moral contributions of Judea; but it is better and we hope more lasting than those classical civilizations because of those things which were contributed in the interval during that long era of striving and travail commonly known as the "Middle Ages." To very many churchmen indeed the Middle Ages seem to have been a period of pure religion and unexcelled theology. This, of course, carries one immediately into topics sure to stir up vigorous controversy, but in more secular matters omitting many other items of almost equal importance, the Middle Ages have transmitted at least four great and very diverse factors which enter into the fabric of our modern life. Stated without the least logical order, these are:

1. *The germs of representative government, with the possibility of modern democracies, not for small cities merely but for wide nations.*

2. *The beginning of the establishment of the right of women to be the equals of men.*

3. *The founding of great national literatures, as marked especially by certain famous narrative poems of eternal value.*

4. *The establishment of an extremely noble type of architecture, in some respects even surpassing the achievements of the Greeks.*

Let us begin with the birth and early youth of that inconceivably essential thing we call "Democracy."

It is perfectly true that old Athens had a very pure form of democratic government (although slaves and women and a great alien population were carefully disfranchised); also Rome, before Julius Cæsar overthrew the Republic, was governed by a kind of liberal aristocracy in which there were pronounced democratic elements. But it is also true that Athens, Republican Rome and every other type of free government known to antiquity had become matters for moldy history centuries before Alaric's Goths forced the Gates of Rome (410 A. D.), and we advance into the great story of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. If our modern age had had to begin with the traditions and customs of Roman Imperialism all it could have rested upon would have been an example of an inflexible military despotism. Such mighty emperors as Diocletian (284-305 A. D.) and Constantine (306-377) were indeed passionate champions of law, order and justice, but it was the law and justice of a great camp embracing the whole Mediterranean world, and enforced by the drill-master's court-martial controlling civilians no less than soldiers.

Every human being in this enormous empire had been given his *status*—his rank, his privileges and, above all, his precise public burdens and duties. It was nigh impossible to pass from this status, whether to rise or to fall. One by one every form of democratic government had disappeared, and with it almost every form of genuinely local government. The "Sacred Emperor" (so-called even after the monarchs became Christian) was the center of a colossal bureaucracy—great officials, lesser officials, petty officials, all intrenched behind vested privileges, and able

collectively to defy the emperor and make him often only the first slave of his own greatness. Every kind of mortal activity was controlled by these vast government bureaus centered at Rome, Constantinople or other imperial capitals, such as Milan or Ravenna. Taxes for the entire empire were assessed by one arbitrary fiat, bearing alike upon the Caledonian traders by Hadrian's wall in North Britain and the Egyptian peasants by the first Nile cataract. The Emperors (or the great officers controlling them) regulated by wholesale edicts the wages of carpenters, the fees of lawyers and (after Christianity was accepted) the creeds of the church to be recited by all good subjects.

Under this régime, of course, the great "Senatorial" landowners were carefully defended in all their noble immunities, but as was inevitable, every city handicraftsman became bound to follow the precise calling of his father (the government *might* lose taxes if he shifted his occupation), and more serious still—the great bulk of the population, the peasantry, lost their personal freedom. Without becoming precisely slaves, the farming folk of the Later Roman Empire were legally *serfs* (*coloni*), bound to the soil, unable to quit their little farms and seek less exacting masters, and compelled to render to the landowners so great a proportion of their crops and such onerous personal services that life became one drab monotony of toil.

When we ask "Why did the Roman Empire 'fall'?" the answer has to be: "Not merely luxury and sensuality among the mighty; not merely the swords of the invading Goths and Vandals, but behind all these causes was the numbing, crushing effect of the great centralized despotism of this 'Later Roman Régime.' " It was a despotism ruinous to human ambition and the spirit of enterprise, crippling to successful commerce, and which would probably have made ancient civilization perish of stagnation and dry rot, even if no Germanic barbarians had sacked Rome and rent province from province.

From this deadly centralization the destruction wrought in the earlier Middle Ages rid the world forever. It is true that the abstract idea that God had ordained that all people should belong to the Roman Empire, and that

the "Holy Roman Emperor" (from 962 onwards he was, in reality, only the king of Germany elected by the German princes) *ought* to have universal sovereignty, was a conception that died only in the fourteenth century. But for practical purposes governmental centralization and bureaucracy vanished in thin air with the passing of the old Western Empire. Even Charlemagne's famous reign (he ruled 768-814) restored the old machinery very imperfectly only in France, Germany and Northern Italy. After him almost the last of the former régime disappeared absolutely. Then out of the ruin of his empire came that strange thing, "feudalism," which has been called by disgusted modern critics, "organized anarchy."

Under feudalism, whatever the fine theories, Western Europe was parceled out in many hundreds of petty principalities, "seigneuries," "baronies," "countships," "duchies,"—as we can call them almost at random. Each was normally under a strong-handed, effective warrior, proud of his right to "pit and gallows," i. e., power of life and death over nearly all the inhabitants of his narrow dominions. The personal tyranny of some of these petty despots was hideous. "Counts by the grace of God," some three hundred nobles of France at one time boasted themselves, which meant that they obeyed their nominal "king" hardly at all, and had very elastic consciences touching their duties towards heaven. It boots not to recite stories of family wars, tortures, murders, vile deeds of wholesale oppression. The one important thing is that, thanks to this terrible physic, the world escaped from the more enduring danger of the numbing régime of personal *status* of the Later Roman Empire. Not that class lines were not rigidly drawn in the Middle Ages, but the feudal anarchy in fact created conditions so bad that in self-defense mankind was driven to very drastic remedies. New political forces arose, new laws, new combinations were invoked, and out of them almost against their founders' wills developed personal and political liberty for the masses. The public institutions of the present day were born out of the painful needs of those "good old days when knights were bold."

It was not wholly correct to say that the republics of Greece and Rome with all their passion for "liberty" were not able to hit upon that great instrument of later-day liberty—representative government. It is correct to say that among the ancients the idea of systematically deputing the making of laws to a standing group of legislators, chosen by districts from all classes of the citizens, was so undeveloped as to be wholly ineffective. Alike in Athens and in Rome although executive officers (*archons* in Athens, *consuls* in Rome) could be elected, the actual passage of laws seemed ordinarily the function of *all* the citizens gathering in one vast town-meeting.

At Athens when there were some 30,000 voting citizens the disposal of business by so huge a gathering was obviously cumbersome and open to many objections. In Rome when (under the later republic) the number of voters ran up to several hundreds of thousands it was simply out of the question for them all to assemble together. Many of them were living in the remote towns of Italy or even in distant provinces; yet they could vote on proposed laws only by visiting Rome. The natural result was that by Julius Cæsar's day the average law was simply enacted by the then notorious "mob" (that is, the poor plebeians resident in the capital, plus a horde of ex-slaves who had received the franchise), a voting body peculiarly subject to coarse manipulation by selfish politicians. This one factor largely explains why the Roman republic had to be replaced by the more efficient "empire." A single capable despot is ordinarily far preferable as a ruler to an irresponsible corrupt multitude. To the world of the time of Christ the power of the Cæsars came not as a loss but as a remarkable gain.

Republican government had thus practically been dismissed from the civilized world as a failure long before the Roman social structure began to break down in the fourth and fifth centuries. Could it ever be revived? Philosophers were perhaps willing to admit that small cities, with no outlying dominions could govern themselves sometimes democratically, by mass-meetings of the citizens; but for greater districts, let alone large nations, the task seemed

impossible. Despotism therefore appeared to be inevitable, as the only successful means of governing widely scattered groups of men, and the civilized world has always feared anarchy so much that to escape it there has been a steady tendency to surrender liberty. Then followed the Middle Ages, and with them a new hope for political liberty, thanks to the *enormously important concept of representative government*.

The simple governments of the Germanic barbarians, when their tribes penetrated the dying Empire, were not so very different from those of primitive Greece and Rome. A great many undeveloped peoples had the same fundamental idea of a mass-meeting of all the fighting men (the only persons who really counted), of a narrower council of experienced elders and of petty chiefs to control the mass meeting and to frame propositions for its approval, and finally, of a greater chief, a prince or "king"—some tall, strong warrior, preferably descended from the preceding king—who would be chosen when the old leader disappeared by the "Aye! Aye!" of the whole assembly, and who then (ordinarily for life) would lead in war and preside in the council. The Homeric Greeks had all these institutions; so did the earliest Romans of the days of the legendary Romulus and Remus, and so again the Germanic "forest children," when their war-bands thundered over Rhine and Danube to despoil the rich, wicked and decaying cities of the later empire.

But the Germanic invaders had apparently a willingness, which the Greeks and the Romans did not possess correspondingly, to entrust very wide powers to those deputies which every little sept and clan had to send to the wider general tribal councils. Besides, the Germanic conquerors did not promptly split up into completely independent city-states as did the Greeks and Latins before devouring Rome absorbed them. The kingdom of the Franks soon embraced nearly all of Northern France, plus Belgium, plus nearly half of Germany. The Lombards presently controlled about half of Italy. The Visigoths for a time dominated all of Spain and much of Southern France. Ere long also in Britain there was an Anglo-Saxon ruler

who claimed lordship over everything south of the savage Piets (early Scots).

The native kings of all these scattered peoples were no doubt anxious to consolidate their power and play the part of Roman emperor-despots as far as possible, but they were unequal to the task. They were usually crude men of the sword, with no real title to their thrones except the personal allegiance of bands of sturdy lancers and axemen. These followers never were modest in their claims. They were always demanding gold, lands and in addition, a very large share in the government. The result was that few kings ever became powerful enough to defy the wishes of their "nobles," that is, of the warriors great enough to demand personally or by deputy a seat in the royal council, and to then claim for that council very large powers.

Since, however, these new Germanic kingdoms carved out of the old empire were usually pretty large, relatively few of the chiefs were important enough to appear at the king's court in their own right. They usually came merely as deputies for the scattered lesser nobility. The kings dared not defy these gatherings of the nobles; and especially the monarch would desire their consent when any new fundamental law for the entire land was proposed. Representative government therefore, if at first only for the military class, was coming into being, and with it the infinite possibilities of the modern types of liberty.

Inevitably, as time advanced, some countries which had emerged from the welter of the overthrow of the Roman empire retained this priceless possession much better than did others. The German conquerors of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries were anything but political theorists. The group of iron-handed warriors who demanded to be allowed to "share in the councils of the king" had not the slightest intension of permitting the peasant-serfs, whom they flogged and exploited, to send deputies to assist also in the government. The greater nobles in turn detested the idea of dividing their powers with the lesser cavaliers, and rebuffed their claims and crippled their deputations whenever possible. And quite as naturally the kings—to their best ability—strove to reign "under God alone"—

i. e., as absolutely as possible. The net result, therefore, was that all important forms of representative governments were presently stifled in many lands.

In Spain across the Middle Ages there was a relatively successful development of forms looking towards national liberty in the kingdom of Aragon (Northeastern Spain), but these were speedily blighted after the union of Aragon with the larger kingdom of Castile (1479 A. D.), where the royal power had been steadily developed at the expense both of the nobility and the lower classes.

In Italy, after the conquest of the Lombards by Charlemagne (774 A. D.), the unhappy peninsula became for centuries the stamping ground for foreign invaders mostly from Germany. National unity became impossible, and the country was doomed to a miserable division into a multitude of petty governments, whereof some indeed, e. g., the states of the church (under the popes), the kingdom of Naples and the oligarchic republic of Venice, grew to considerable size, while others, notably the cities of Milan and Florence, became city-republics of the old Græco-Roman type. But anything like a general Italian national government was out of the question. Italy, with all her vast contributions to mediæval and renaissance culture, had to wait until the nineteenth century when Victor Emmanuel and Cavour were to win for her that unity whereof her patriots across the ages had dreamed.

In Germany the difficulty was hardly less. During an important part of the Middle Ages (especially between 962 and 1250 A. D.) the kings of Germany (elected each for life by the upper nobility) pursued the vicious will-o'-the-wisp of the restoration of the "Holy Roman Empire" (comprising for practical purposes the realms of Charlemagne). They still dreamed of reviving the dominion of the Cæsars, and they could ordinarily prosper so far as to get themselves crowned at Rome by the popes as secular rulers of all Christians in this world, even as the popes ruled all Christians in matters spiritual. But in fact these "emperors" usually had only a very feeble hold upon their own Germany, and when they tried to make the reluctant Italians bow to an alien yoke, the task was far

beyond them. In France they never had any genuine power at all. But to pursue these grandiose schemes for conquering Italy, one German monarch after another had to buy the support of his great vassals in the north. The result was that the electors (who claimed the especial right to choose the emperor), the dukes, the superior counts and many other high nobles had to be permitted to consolidate their own local powers, to stamp out their subjects' liberties and to become themselves petty kings in all but name.

At last the bubble of "world sovereignty" was pricked in the thirteenth century. The German kings were thrown back upon their own country, and while still calling themselves "emperors," ceased to meddle largely in the affairs of Italy. But the mischief was done. The German princes had now so entrenched themselves that neither a monarch from above nor a popular uprising from below could destroy their despotic power. Many "free cities" indeed rose in Germany in the later Middle Ages, seats of great commercial and cultural activity and ruled ordinarily by oligarchies of prosperous merchants, but while often they made head against local oppression, they were too weak and too scattered to lead a genuinely national movement. Germany continued down to the very time of Napoleon one of the most despot-ridden countries in the world, with over three hundred jangling "sovereign princes" (often misruling microscopic dominions), while almost every vestige of genuine popular self-government was exterminated. The result was that the great and extraordinarily gifted German people, who have made such remarkable contributions to civilization, have never been trained effectively in modern political life. To this deplorable failure in the Middle Ages can be traced many of the causes of the World War and of the international problems of this hour.

But in two nations there was no such failure; these were France and England. In France free representative government never achieved a complete growth in the Middle Ages, and it became entirely overshadowed by the colossal power of the later monarchy which culminated with Louis XIV (1643-1715). It appeared in fact to have per-

ished, but such was not the case, the French Revolution (1789-95) had as its first chapter the attempt to refurbish the old "States General," an institution of representative government which reached far back into the Middle Ages.

In France, beginning about the era of the Crusades, the kings, who at first were really obeyed only in Paris and a little district around, made at length extremely successful efforts to teach the feudal nobles that they were subjects and not actual sovereigns. But in such a process the monarchs needed all the help possible. They gained this by making friends with the rising power of the "communes" (chartered towns) that were now developing in France as commerce and peaceful arts revived, and as a strong artisan-merchant class began to emerge from the clod-hopping peasantry. These towns were often very small (ten thousand inhabitants made a "great city" in the Middle Ages), but they were very numerous, and they were fast becoming a thorn in the sides of the nobles at whose expense they were developing. The kings usually encouraged these towns, helped them to more advantageous charters, protected them against feudal exploitation, and in turn profited by their loyal support—not so much in fighting men but in the even more desirable item of paying liberal taxes.

It is one of the ironies of history that the royal power of France, which for a time seemed the incarnation of absolutism, was founded very largely upon an alliance between the king and the lower classes; for in mediæval France the bulk of the people often found one strong monarch in Paris far preferable to several hundred petty monarchs upon the feudal baronies. The kings of France were able to humble the great barons and strip them of their political power to a large degree because the bourgeoisie (townspeople) almost uniformly supported the king. The bourgeoisie, however, reaped presently a very handsome reward—they were given an honorable position in what we may call one of the great organs of the government of the now consolidating French nation.

In 1302 Philip the Fair, a very high-handed but equally astute monarch, found himself in a most bitter dispute

over "temporalities" with Pope Boniface VIII. To defy the papal anathemas he needed every possible support from his people; therefore he convoked the first "States General." The great nobles and the French prelates had been frequently convened in high council to advise mediæval kings in great emergencies; now, in addition to the representatives of the clergy and nobility, the chartered towns from all over France were summoned to send their deputies. The bourgeoisie thus became the "Third Estate," entitled, the king now told them, to share with the two upper classes in advising the sovereign in national crises and in assenting to changes in the fundamental laws of the kingdom. Naturally the deputies of the communes were delighted at their honors, and in extremes of loyalty voted every anti-papal measure which Philip demanded; but a precedent had been set. Henceforth a large section of the French non-nobles felt themselves entitled to send their representatives to participate in the national government.

The States General of France constituted at best a very halting step towards a really free government. They were seldom convened. The bourgeoisie at most meetings wasted their strength in quarrels with the nobles and clergy, so that the king could manage the situation to his own ends. Powerful and successful kings could ordinarily, in fact, rule with hardly a reference to States Generals at all. Worse still, the peasants on the farms (nine-tenths of the whole population) were still unrepresented, and were helplessly under the thumb of their noble landlords. France never, therefore, developed the kind of parliaments which we find in England, and finally in 1614 a meeting of the States General broke up amid such miserable factional wrangling that many Frenchmen vowed that the land was better off without such a futile institution. Absolutionist kings like Louis XIV and Louis XV treated as an insult any later suggestion that they should convene the national "Estates." *But the idea of a representative legislature for all France was never lost.* Not merely were provincial estates, undemocratic indeed and very feeble, maintained in some of the royal provinces, but the

memory of the former national gatherings was carefully cherished. When in 1789 the decadent monarchy was drifting into bankruptcy, the despairing ministers of Louis XVI deliberately revived the old mediæval institution, and this time the peasants also were summoned to elect delegates. Before 1789 was over this States General had been transmogrified into the "Constitution Assembly" and the French Revolution was more than begun. It is perfectly proper to say that the present French Parliament, especially its Chamber of Deputies, is the heir and grandson of that company of representatives of the chartered towns which met in Paris in 1302 at the summons of Philip the Fair.

But the English Parliament is not the grandson of the English legislative assembly of the Middle Ages; it is the assembly itself, at a lusty and unregenerate old age. In the case of England the debt of the present day is so vast and complicated, and every explanation becomes so technical that to state the case accurately would require many pages. Very briefly and imperfectly the development was something like this:

When the Anglo-Saxons overran Britain (450-600 A. D.), chasing the Celts back into the Welsh mountains, they brought with them substantially the old tribal customs of the Germanic peoples and seem to have kept them in their new homes with rather fewer changes than did their brother barbarians who conquered the mainland; largely perhaps because Britain (now becoming "England"—"Angle-land") was very isolated and less affected by the currents of world history and the surviving institutions of old Rome than were Spain, Gaul or Italy. Some of the Anglo-Saxon kings, notably the great Alfred (871-901 A. D.), were men of very high character and ability, but none of them were able really to consolidate their monarchy and make it a strong effective nation. The result was that a mass of institutions survived which in the main allowed all the land-owning classes a large share in the central government along with very considerable local liberties; and the situation thus drifted along until in 1066 the battle of Hastings apparently delivered the land com-

pletely into the power of William the Conqueror and the horde of Norman-French adventurers who followed his standard.

William and his successors treated the Anglo-Saxons ruthlessly, but they could not exterminate or really enslave them, and they certainly established a régime of law and order far superior to anything obtaining in corresponding contemporary feudal countries upon the continent. However, the Norman kings of England wasted much of their substance and influence in a desperate attempt to build up for themselves a great dominion in France, and by 1200 a very evil and incapable king, John, found himself at desperate odds with his own nobles—the descendants of the Norman conquerors indeed, but men who for all that were willing to seek allies among the conquered English to make head against the truly wicked king. The process was therefore precisely the reverse of that in France. In France *the king* had made common cause with the bourgeoisie against the nobles; in England *the nobles* made alliance with the more useful portions of the lower classes against the king. The English nobles had little love for the Anglo-Saxon “thanes,” “franklins,” and “yeomen” from whom they accepted aid, but necessity makes strange bedfellows; and in their demands upon the king they had to give a certain heed to the wishes of the commonalty. This is what lends such intense interest to the story of the winning of Magna Charta.

This famous document is by no means the broad charter of liberties such as is often imagined. The barons and bishops who forced the iniquitous John to seal it at Runnymede, the meadow near Windsor, thought almost entirely of their own narrow interests. The privileges claimed were privileges largely for the favored upper classes. But the new political process had been begun. “Rights,” at first won only for the magnates, almost inevitably had to be conceded to a wider and wider circle. And it was presently the good fortune of England to find in Edward I (1272-1302) a mighty king, who was a truly constructive statesman. Edward was intelligent enough to realize that even the monarchy would be more secure if the privileges won

by the great nobles were shared by the lower classes, who in that case would cease to have serious grievances against the royal government.

In 1295 he convened a "Great Council" for the entire kingdom, and this has been well called in history the "Model Parliament." To it came in their own right the nobles and the high prelates, but also each "shire" (county) and "borough" (incorporated town) was summoned to elect from its landholders or citizens two representatives to advise with the king. This was the beginning of the *Commons* of England. The choice of deputies was for centuries limited by very undemocratic local customs, usually giving the election into the control of the more prosperous landowners. For all that, *in theory* it was understood that henceforth every Englishman was somehow represented in Parliament by the deputies from his district, and thus indirectly he had a share in the government of the realm.

It was also the real good fortune of England that Edward I had successors who were often so beset with difficulties that they had to keep their thrones by letting Parliament become ever more indispensable, and to grant to it not merely the right of voting new laws but also of giving to or withholding from the king the privilege of collecting taxes. If, after 1400, several English kings played the part of harsh despots, it was usually because they could manipulate Parliament to suit their ambitions, not because they defied it. Henry VIII put through his worst acts with the full official consent of Parliament. Charles I (a far worthier man personally) broke with Parliament, and lost his throne and his head.

The other great institutional contributions from England in the later Middle Ages came through the evolution of the "common law" (national English usages as against the Roman law in favor upon the continent), and of trial by jury,* which, despite drawbacks, has remained for centuries a bulwark against royal or judicial tyranny. Our indebtedness to mediæval England under either of these heads is incalculable.

*Which originated apparently in Normandy and then was early naturalized in England.

Thus the Middle Ages gave to the modern world, even if at first under very disguised forms, the germs and the actual beginning of that incalculable blessing: *free representative government*. This was an enormous contribution upon the political side. Yet upon the social side there was a contribution even greater, considering its implications across the ages—the establishment of the *dignity of woman and her essential equality with man*.

The status of women has remained almost the same in the Orient for scores of centuries. The first Pharaohs had their concubines, secondary consorts, consorts of first rank, and “great queen,” almost exactly as a Moslem sultan or Brahmin rajah might today. The patriarchs of Israel were not wholly examples of social virtue, and Solomon had his thousand wives. At the dawn of history in Europe the status of women was somewhat better. Technical monogamy was somewhat the rule. In Homeric Greece, Hecuba, Penelope and Helen met Priam, Odysseus and Menelaus not merely as consorts but as nearly complete social equals. Also in Sparta women enjoyed such privileges that worthies like Cleomenes and Leonidas were looked upon as hen-pecked and oppressed by their non-Spartan contemporaries. But for some reason, not wholly clear, in Periclean Athens women were shut away from all public scenes in a manner reminding one of the Oriental harem system. Only women of the hetærae could mingle in artistic and literary circles, and share that brilliant social intercourse which we associate with the Golden Age of Athens. A woman of good family, it was declared, “should be seen and talked about just as little as possible.” This absence of the ennobling influence of genuinely “good” women is one of the most serious defects in the otherwise marvelous Athenian civilization, and very possibly a prime reason for its speedy decline.

Rome was more fortunate. Roman women were given far greater liberties than their Athenian sisters. The Roman *matrona* was allowed to go freely in public, to mingle in the great banquets, and (if the family was rich) to have a fairly complete control of her share of the property. A Roman man would never have been ashamed (as

an Athenian might have been ashamed) to tell his friends, "I did this upon the advice of my mother." Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, was only *one* of the truly noble women whose decisions affected all Roman history.

But this position of women in Latin Italy had its marked limitations. Before the law they were always in theory minors under guardianship; and their position was still more seriously weakened by two great handicaps—the control of their marriage and the grievous facility of divorce.

There are few less edifying stories in Roman history than those of many noble women and princesses, who were not merely forced into loveless marriages, sometimes in mere infancy, but who were abruptly divorced and remarried whenever their fathers found public or private advantage in shifting sons-in-law. Again, under the empire the marriage relation, and, consequently, the sanctity of the home, was constantly undermined by the outrageous ease with which husband or wife could dissolve his or her connection. A mere declaration before witnesses sufficed for either party, without the least further formalities except to divide the joint property.

A Roman woman, it is true, enjoyed this right to end an unwelcome union hardly less than did her husband, but it was one in which nearly all circumstances favored the man. The woman automatically reverted to the control of her parents or perhaps of an elder brother or distant guardian. Worse still, the custody of all the children always went to the father, no matter what his reputation for brutality. A Roman woman therefore enjoyed many privileges but few absolute rights, and her marriage relations were usually founded upon family convenience or sordid financial calculation. The honest forms of romance hardly existed, and if conjugal affection sometimes sprang up, as no doubt it did, it was more by good luck than by wise custom.

When the new feudal kingdoms emerged out of the wreck of the Roman empire at first the position of women seemed no better. Girls were still married off by their parents at an outrageously early age. They were without firm legal rights, and often were grievously mishandled by father,

guardian or husband. The early Middle Ages presented few schools for the great social virtues. Probably the austerities of certain famous monks were in part an implied protest against the flagrant carnalities of many Frankish, Gothic or Lombard war-chiefs. Even such a lauded and truly high-minded potentate as Charlemagne had many irregular consorts and a kind of harem extensive enough for old King David. Nevertheless as the Middle Ages progressed, as customs softened, as civilization resumed its advance, it was evident that an enormous step forward was being taken socially—lawful “love,” as something sentimentally ennobling and not a mere display of fleshly passion, was being brought into the world.

It is far easier to state results than to trace the operation of dim causes. Probably, however, these factors were at least silently working across the centuries to produce a blessed result:

I. The old Germanic peoples had (like the early Homeric Greeks) allowed their women great freedom; their family life was relatively pure and young men had been taught not merely to be legally monogamous, but to be faithful to one woman far beyond the wont of the Romanized folk whom they conquered. This good old custom, though often enough warped by temptation and passion, was never wholly lost in all those lands which the northern tribes permanently occupied. Its implications for the future of the race were incalculable.

II. The passionate worship of the Mother Mary in the mediæval church (whatever its theological bearings) had one unescapable, practical result. It was impossible even for heavy-handed warriors not to feel an increased tenderness and devotion towards the entire sex, whereof one member had been honored by being permitted to be the “Mother of God.” Many of the greatest saints of the church also were women. Inevitably all women came to share somewhat of the reverence paid to their sainthood.

III. The church, on the whole, set itself nobly against some of the greatest sins against womanhood. It rigidly forbade scandalous marriages among near kinsmen. It declared marriage an indissoluble sacrament and formal

divorce became impossible. Annulments could sometimes be obtained, but they were so infrequent that even a very evil-minded baron could not count on them as an escape from a tedious wedlock. Some of the fairest passages in ecclesiastical history recite how popes took the side of helpless and foully abused wives. Philip Augustus of France (1180-1223) was a great and victorious king, but when he undertook to put away his innocent queen, the Danish Ingeborg, in favor of his paramour, Agnes of Meran, Innocent III mobilized against him all the terrific artillery of the church, put the papal interdict (suspension of religious rites) upon his entire kingdom, and forced the overweening monarch, who was just humbling England and Germany, to receive back his lawful wife. Like instances with minor potentates can be multiplied.

The church, too, threw its protection over the marriage ceremonies. It could not procure perfect conditions and end all abuses. It could ordinarily secure, however, that the girl should at least be in her 'teens before marriage and not be a mere child, and that she should not be forced into wedlock absolutely without her consent. Furthermore, feudal law secured to heiresses their property by firm title, and their husbands could only control it as their agents, not as an absolute possession. These factors and many others, obscure and less easily stated, contributed to create the new situation—and the result was that the twelfth century knew clearly what the second century had hardly known—*romance* had entered into the lives of men and of women.

At first it took the form of fairly childish sentimentalizing that promised little—songs in praise of white arms, golden hair and well-shaped ankles. Women were still given in marriage so young that (even if their parents would have permitted them) they could not have selected husbands on any wise basis. Furthermore, social customs were still very cubbish and uncouth. Probably it was in the south of France (Languedoc), where the old luxurious life of Roman days still lingered, and where it was easy to "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world," that young cavaliers, who found the rough sports of the tilt-yard growing wearisome, began to strum harps in the

praise not of deeds of arms but of noble ladies' penciled eyebrows.

The women thus celebrated by these "troubadours" ("inventors" of verses) of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were nearly always married women, in nowise married to the troubadours themselves. The fact that husbands were jealous and had a brutal manner of intervening added to the excitement of the game. Too often the lady named in the songs repaid the knightly poetaster with "her kiss and love" and the ensuing romance marked a moral if not a physical tragedy. For all that, the implications of these new sentimental relations between men and women bore a great prophesy for the future; and a nobler type of love came presently to replace the baser. About 1160 there lived a South French troubadour, Bernard de Ventadoun. In his songs appears a passage that has no parallel in all Greek and Latin literature:*

It is no wonder if I sing
A better song than all the rest
For love is mightier in my breast,
My life a fitter offering:
For heart and body, mind and sense,
Are given to Love, and all my might.

As these words imply, the idea was already developing that the love between young men and young women was not necessarily illicit, or a chance circumstance after a marriage arranged by others. Of course this more honorable type of romance developed very slowly, and, long after it found its way into literature, the giving of daughters in marriage was ordinarily considered the high prerogative of parents, with the damsels only *pro forma* consulted. In any case the gallantries of the troubadours and their numerous imitators and successors in North France, England, Germany and Italy only affected a small if self-important class—the knightly nobility.

*There are plenty of stories of *passion* in the classical writers, e. g., the passion of Dido for Æneas; there are almost none until close to the fall of the empire, of what we would today consider genuinely romantic and sentimental "love."

Chivalry, which at first implied only skillful horsemanship, and then came to mean the gallant treatment of gentlewomen, was not for the burghers or the doltish peasants. It was centuries before the women of those classes were permitted to have an honest dash of romance and color to glorify their plodding, work-a-day lives. But the idea that women were inherently of a nobler race than men, to be defended, served and worshiped, had been added to the consciousness of Europe, and across the ages worked the new conception.

It was a long journey from the scene of the noble dame at Languedoc, presiding at a contest between two young knights to see which of the two could praise her skin and hands in the more elegant madrigals, to the condition when women could receive equal rights in learned faculties and national parliaments, but the initial steps had been taken when youths in the Middle Ages began to assume an attitude towards women almost inconceivable in Athens or Rome. And for this revolutionary change in the economy of the race, the change which brings an hundred per cent instead of possibly only fifty per cent of the sum of human capacity to the solving of the world's problems, the initial thanks must be given those centuries which immediately followed the so-called "Dark Ages."

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In explaining the growth of "Romance" in social life, inevitably reference has been made to one important form of mediæval literature, the troubadour lyrics. These are of very marked significance as indicating the growth of the conception of the noble worth of womanhood, but as landmarks in strictly literary history many other productions of the Middle Ages naturally seem more important. Down to the very end of the epoch it goes without saying that not merely was Latin the language of the church and of the learned world, but it was used by writers upon more or less "popular" themes. Probably it was only good fortune that prevented Dante from writing the "Divine Comedy" in Latin, instead of in the undeveloped and still discounted Italian, and Petrarch, a little later, who is now

mainly remembered for his Italian sonnets and madrigals to Laura, devoted his highest energies to writing a long Latin epic, the *Africa*, which he fondly imagined would win him an immortality approaching that of Virgil. Monks and scholars indeed continued to ignore the "vulgar tongues" long after each of the great peoples of Europe had evolved a vigorous national language and a popular literature of its own. Not to the learned schoolmen but to the minstrels of the common folk must we look for the beginnings of those great literatures which express the best of the world's thought of today.

The professional story-teller is the master of a very old art. We know that he delighted his breathless crowds in old Memphis and Babylon just as he still delights them in the unspoiled cities of the Orient today. In early Greece he made a remarkable invention, the hexameter line, easy for composition, easy to remember, extremely effective to recite. The immediate result of this invention was the production of the Homeric epics, the greatest narrative poems ever possessed by man. The old Germans had also their bards with legends of brave deeds and bygone heroes, recited in a rather uncouth form of verse. After European life had stabilized itself in the Middle Ages, and before the dramatic art could begin to revive (at first mainly through the church miracle and mystery plays) the wandering *jongleurs* in France and their companions in other countries went strolling from castle to castle, amusing the barons and their swarms of retainers, while the great logs roared on the hearths through the long evenings.

The national literatures of nearly all the great peoples of modern Europe found therefore their origins not in the learned Latin (although much clever, vigorous stuff was therein written, and mediæval Latin is not to be despised) but in these very unpretentious tales, ordinarily recited in a crude sing-song verse, and at the outset probably seldom reduced to writing. The earliest of the stories to be put in manuscript seem to date from the eleventh century. The age delighted in the ceaseless repetition of tales of feats of arms, and to modern taste many of these stories of one desperate adventure after another become decidedly

monotonous. This is true both of the long *chansons de geste*, epics of martial deeds of the French vernacular, and the shorter and more polished "Romances"* that presently succeeded them. The early poems in German and other national languages were of the same character. But just as at the beginning of the Greek civilization there came the splendid and eternally youthful and vital Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, so, at the beginning of this literary movement in the new nations of Europe, there came two very great "minstrels' epics"—the *Chanson de Roland* in France and the *Nibelungenlied* in Germany. Then at the end of the period, not as its first blossom but as its perfect flower, came the greatest narrative poem ever produced since the passing of Homer—the *Divine Comedy* of Dante.†

The *Chanson de Roland* seems to have been reduced to writing by a North French bard a little after 1050 A. D., but we know that the story existed orally and also in a courtly Latin version considerably earlier. The ballad meter is very crude from a Tennysonian standpoint, and the ideas expressed are often equally crude and primitive; but the whole narrative is told with a conciseness, vividness, directness and sobriety which are always the hall-marks of great literature—witness the great stories of the Bible.

The *Song of Roland*, alien though much of its thought must be to the reader of today, is one of those great, rough-hewn but absolutely natural and often magnificent monuments of literature which teach so much of the human past. Thanks to it, we can see as in a photograph much of the crude philosophy and motivization of the feudal nobility just before the time of the Crusades, when in thought and spirit "France" was still very young. The *Chanson de Roland* is therefore one of the great gifts from the central epoch of the Middle Ages.

The second great and enduring gift to literature is

*So-called because they were written in the "Romance" (non-Latin) popular tongues.

†The new national vernacular of England found its first great expression in the poems of Chaucer. But, thanks to the problem of slowly amalgamating the Anglo-Saxon and Norman elements, "English" civilization, as we know it, was somewhat late in developing. Chaucer lived from about 1340 to 1400 A. D., and his work really lies beyond the strict confines of the Middle Ages.

from mediæval Germany—the *Nibelungenlied*. This is another minstrels' epic and its story having been caught up into modern poetry and opera, is very familiar. The *Nibelungenlied* is assuredly of much older origin than the *Song of Roland*. The French hero we know really perished in 778, while some of the characters in the *Nibelungenlied* bear a shadowy resemblance to personages of the fifth century. The existing story of Siégfried, Brunhild, Kriemhild and Etzel (Attila) is traceable to bards who assembled the old legends at least as early as 980 A. D. But the literary version which we now possess was remolded, it is claimed by a certain Konrad, about 1140, and then given still more modern touches by an unnamed *spielmann* (professional bard) about 1190. What we have therefore is a somewhat more finished poem than the French epic, and one representing a later stage of mediæval civilization.

Metrically and structurally the *Nibelungenlied* is far more complicated than the *Chanson de Roland*. The plot is decidedly more elaborate, the play of human motive more complex. On the other hand, the *Chanson* is obviously a *Christian* epic, albeit the Christianity of Roland and Oliver is the religion of doughty warriors whose chief article of faith is the wholesale slaughter of infidels. In the German epic Christian forms are indeed maintained: for example, Siegfried is buried with all the elaborate ritual of mediæval Catholicism, but the crude pagan ideas of the original version crop out almost everywhere.* Kriemhild, Siégfried's outraged widow, devises vengeance for his murder with all the unblushing hate and fury of a heathen. The Christianity is manifestly only a late veneer. But what a wealth of stirring incident, of vivid imagery, of strenuous action, the *spielmann* who redacted the older sagas has passed on to us! Far more than by the *Chanson* was later literature to be affected by this story of the adventures of Siegfried, of his wooing of Kriemhild, of the jealous wrath of Brunhild and of how she incited the grim Hagen to murder him, and, last but not least, of how Kriem-

*There is indeed a Norse version which is strictly pagan.

hild got herself married to Etzel, the terrible king of the Huns, and by his aid took memorable vengeance upon Hagen and comrades. The Wagnerian opera found its best motifs in this work of the now shadowy bards of twelfth-century Germany. The *Nibelungenlied* is therefore another of the most precious bequests of the Middle Ages.

But the greatest literary bequest is from Italy and it comes when the Middle Ages were about to vanish into the more vivid glories of the Renaissance. The *Divine Comedy* of Dante has rightly been called "the mediæval synthesis"—the final summary of all the best thought that had passed through the world in the five centuries following Charlemagne. In the poem of Dante we have no "natural epic" woven by unclerly bards out of a mass of legends and folk-tales. The *Divine Comedy* is entirely a "personal epic," the product of a single genius consciously working upon a great literary task. Virgil's *Æneid*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* are among the other superb personal epics, but the creation of Dante towers above them all.

The life of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321 A. D.) is, of course, perfectly well known to history. He was born to an ancient Florentine family at a time when Florence was an extremely prosperous city-republic, with its wealth resting upon the solid foundations of an active woolen industry plus the scientific development of commerce. It was his misfortune, when in the prime of manhood, to be caught in the miserable feuds of the Guelph (pro-papal) and Ghibelline (anti-papal) parties then racking Florence, and in 1302 he was driven into banishment. For some twenty years, until his death, he wandered in exile, mostly in northern Italy and France, vainly hoping for recall to his native city, although often treated with honor at Verona and other places where he found a friendly refuge.

Even if he had never written the *Divine Comedy*, Dante would have been a writer of fame. His *Vita Nuova* gives a pathetically beautiful account of his hopeless love for the girl Beatrice, and is itself a remarkable example of how the new conception of idealized love for women could ennoble the lives of men. To mention other writings, we may note

his collection of lyrical poems and sonnets, his Latin treatise *De Monarchia*, setting forth the need of a firm imperial government to give peace to the nations, and his essay defending the use of the Italian vernacular as a genuine literary tongue worthy to treat of serious themes. But one masterpiece caps them all. The *Divine Comedy* belongs to all mankind, for it is, even as the old Greek Thucydides boasted of his history, "a possession forever."

The *Divine Comedy* was written during Dante's years of exile and contains many personal allusions to the author. It has been styled by Arthur John Butler, "absolutely unique in literature, [for] it may be safely said that at no other period of the world's history could such a work have been produced." Dante had held high public office in Florence before his banishment; he wrote, therefore, as a practical man of affairs as well as a highly imaginative poet. He was also a man of extraordinarily wide learning. Almost everything in the ancient Latin and in the mediæval doctors he had mastered; he thus wrote out of a wide knowledge and a profound personal experience. His misfortunes had not embittered him, but had driven him to a profound philosophy and to an equally profound belief in the actual goodness of God.

The *Divine Comedy*, be it frankly said, is no book for easy popular reading. It is far removed from the stirring martial deeds of the simple-hearted warriors of the *Song of Roland* and that of the Nibelungs. "Comedy," in fact, it can only be called because its last cantos deal not with tragic anguish but with entrance into heavenly bliss. But for the thoughtful student of a great age the poem is like a mine of purest gold. It is far more than simply a nobly imaginative recital of how Dante was guided first by Virgil (the reputed master of all secular lore) through the horrors of Inferno and next the cleansing fires of Purgatory, and then finally by the beautified Beatrice herself through the ascending glories of Paradise. Of the long narrative it has well been written: "In this vision of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise we have an encyclopædic view of the highest culture and knowledge of the age on philosophy, history, classical literature, physical science, morals, the-

ology, expressed in the sublimest and most exquisite poetry, and with consummate power and beauty of language." If every other memorial of the Middle Ages saving Dante's epic of the soul had perished, we could still say that the epoch must have possessed a culture deep, rich and noble, for only such a culture could have produced such a poem.

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Even to appreciate the older epics of France and Germany requires a fair background of mediæval lore and literature; but the Middle Ages have left another type of remarkable relics, before which the least thoughtful modern must stand and marvel, even if only deep learning can make him understand. In *Gothic Architecture* the world was enriched by a style of building and architectural ornament that will probably keep its supreme beauty and fitness at least through the entire life of the Christian religion.

Today in New York, in Washington and elsewhere in America are rising cathedrals and other churches of remarkable majesty and elegance; but they possess those qualities almost entirely because they imitate legitimately, indeed, but none the less certainly, the architectural elements worked out especially in North France in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Not all the mobilized riches and science of the twentieth century could possibly produce a great church of *an original type* truly surpassing, let us say, the cathedrals of Bourges or of Canterbury. We may be learning to dissect atoms, but very snail-like has been the progress in learning new principles of true beauty.

Of course there was much noble architecture long before the first Gothic church. The old Greek temples were in their way things of perfect loveliness, but their interiors were never intended as gathering places for large groups of worshipers. The building merely housed the great image of the god and provided a safe repository for the rich treasures gradually accumulated in his honor. The great sacrifices were burned upon a large altar outside the main doors of the temple, and here gathered the crowds of pagan votaries "under the blue Ionian weather."

Christian services, however, demanded a large closed hall wherein many could assemble, listen in privacy to the sermons and celebrate the sacraments, and, although when paganism crumbled many old temples were reconsecrated as churches, they were ill-adapted for the new purpose. Much more useful were the court-houses of old Rome, the so-called "basilicas," in which multitudes had been accustomed to gather before the tribunals of the magistrates. Here the Christian altars could replace the tribunals of the prætors, and the worshipers take the place of the litigants and spectators. In this manner many pagan structures were transformed into churches, and most of the older churches in such ancient cities as Rome and Ravenna, even if built by Christian architects, are of this "basilica type"—a single rectangular hall, often divided lengthwise by aisles of columns, a noble style of structure it is true, but not one adapting itself to great elaboration.

The Greek temples had been built without arches. The practical Romans (probably for strictly utilitarian reasons) had introduced the prime innovation of the arch, and this was unescapably followed by the long barrel vault and then by the dome. In the Byzantine art of Constantinople this use of the dome had become the main principle of what was a whole scheme of architecture, and perhaps there has never been a worthier church than the *interior* of Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom"), now alas! a Moslem mosque. But the Byzantine domed architecture never took firm root in the West, and the exterior effect of most Byzantine churches is somewhat disappointing. During the earlier Middle Ages in France, Germany, England or even Italy, the average church was probably of the Roman basilica type,* and was often built largely of wood, depending probably for the interior effects upon a very garish type of ornamentation, and this of materials by no means permanent; then, as the period advanced and the arts of peace multiplied, a new and distinctly revolutionary type of architecture came into being.

Some of the chief innovations, very untechnically stated, were these:

*In Italy and southern France Byzantine domes were often in favor.

I. The churches were now almost always built in the form of a cross, with the long nave for the worshipers separated from the choir for the clergy by an imposing structure projecting both sides at right angles—the transepts.*

II. The principle of the arch enabled the increased use of vaulting, so that a stone roof, capable of extremely fine decoration upon its supporting ribs, columns and piers, could be hung in the air, many feet above the interior pavement.

III. To sustain this vaulting there developed the general use of buttresses. At first these were gigantic exterior masses of masonry, but later, as technical skill increased, they grew lighter and more elegant, and presently were attached only at their ends to the structure. These “flying buttresses” seemed to hang the massive roof in a half-soaring position between heaven and earth.

IV. Along with these marked innovations came the use of *pointed* instead of merely round arches. The pointed arch and the new pointed pinnacles and ornaments that went with it were peculiarly adapted to Christian architecture; they pointed upward and heavenward, not like the Roman arch and circle which turned itself back to earth.

V. The increased use of buttresses for the vaulting made the side-walls merely light curtains—they had no great weights to bear. As a result, vast openings became possible, which could be filled with the tracery of magnificent windows which in turn gleamed with the jewel-tints of marvelously painted glass.

VI. Such complicated structures as those just outlined loaned themselves very readily to all manner of ornament, foliated scrolls and molding, carved pillars, capitals and pilasters, and innumerable niches in which could be set whole galaxies of sculptured saints. As a result this new “Gothic” architecture afforded noble scope for almost every kind of artistic activity—for the sculptor, the mosaic worker, the glass-painter no less than the architect and the mason. In a great cathedral could be embodied almost all

*Transepts are also found in certain Byzantine dome churches.

that was best in the craftsmanship and the art of the entire age.

This architecture of course had to go through a preliminary stage of development. We call "Romanesque" those very solid and stately churches of the German Rhinelands, such as the cathedrals of Worms and Mayence, the majestic pile of Durham* in England, and such a structure as the cathedral of Pisa. These buildings have still, as a rule, the round arches, and although extremely beautiful, the adhesion to old Roman (in Venice to Byzantine) models is still evident. There are also very noble Romanesque churches in France, as witness the remarkable buildings in Caen, in Normandy. But it was the glory of the men of northern France that late in the eleventh century, in the region close to Paris, they began to build churches with the *pointed* arches and flying buttresses, and with soaring roofs and vaulting, upon such an original principle that these creations are known forever, not as Romanesque, but as "Gothic."

The famous Gothic churches of Europe nearly all date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. France led the way. There are wonderful Gothic cathedrals at Strassbourg and Cologne, but they are obviously on the French model. In England there were decided changes from the French examples; such cathedrals as Canterbury, Lincoln, Salisbury, and York, are, as a rule, longer than their French sisters, but they average lower, and sometimes their roofs are not of stone vaulting but simply of wood. France, therefore, is the professional architect's paradise, although for pure beauty many of the non-French buildings are unsurpassed. In any case, this array of majestic cathedrals covering northwestern Europe is a testimony impressive beyond words to the nobility of the civilization of the later Middle Ages.

The building of these cathedrals was of course a great public enterprise, carried on by an entire community sometimes for several generations. Frequently the project was taken up by very small and poor towns indeed, mere collections of thatched hovels, while the whole wealth and strength of the countryside went into erecting a magnifi-

*In an architecture especially known as "Early English."

cent church. The task was usually commenced out of a deep enthusiasm as a great "work unto God," and into it went not merely skill but an enduring, devoted love. Frequently the local bishop took the initiative, then enlisted all the aid of neighboring monks, burghers and peasants. Arrogant barons not merely gave of their substance but carried stones and mortar as a means to squaring accounts with a sore-tried heaven. We hear of bands of robbers contributing their spoils in hopes that the saints would look the other way when they engaged in pillage.

Cathedrals such as the finest that exist in France or England were not to be built in a year or often in a generation. Their creators felt that they were laboring on something destined to endure for all time, and always asked the question not "how fast" but "how well?" As a result often the *inner side* of sculptures and moldings, set where they are concealed from human eye, are as finely finished as the outer. The sculptors would have said that if man could not see, at least God could see, and that they were accomplishing their work solely for Him! The Gothic cathedrals are, therefore, so wonderful because they embody the deepest religious convictions of their builders.

Many were the architects and masons who laid the foundations of these incomparable structures, yet never lived to see them fairly completed. Notre Dame de Paris was begun in 1163 but the great towers were not erected before 1225. Rheims cathedral was begun in 1211, but even the choir was not finished for about thirty years; and a cathedral that took less than forty years to complete in its chief members was undoubtedly the exception. As for the task of ornamentation, of adding new altars, new clusters of sculptured saints, new areas of stained glass—that process was bound to go on forever. Comparatively few mediæval cathedrals were ever really completed, and often they show strange contradictions in architecture as does that of Chartres, where an incongruous Renaissance tower of the sixteenth century rises beside its far more dignified older sister of the twelfth. All these changes and variety however give the unescapable impression that a Gothic cathedral is,

after a manner, *a living being*, a majestic tree forever throwing forth new shoots and branches.

What, then, shall we say in praise of the fertility, the tireless devotion, the enormous fund of energy behind this movement of church building, which endured for a little over one hundred years? During this time, so Henry Adams has computed, some eighty Gothic cathedrals were erected in France alone, as well as more than five hundred large and superior churches; and England and Germany were scarcely behind!

* * * * *

Thus have been stated, very imperfectly, only four achievements of beauty or of enormous social influence, for which our boasted modern times stands debtor to the Middle Ages. When the final word has been spoken about the abiding value of our recent material conquests, can we be confident that the debt of the centuries, yet to follow, to our own feverish, clamorous present will loom equally great?

THE MIDDLE AGES

THE *Middle Ages* is a term employed for convenience to indicate the lapse of time between the Fall of Rome and the Renaissance. At best it is indefinite for, although 476 A. D. is ordinarily accepted as the year terminating the dominance of the Roman Empire, equally good reasons could be given for placing this event a century or two earlier. Similarly, while the early years of the fourteenth century are sometimes assumed to have ushered in the "Rebirth," we cannot determine with exactitude when this new attitude toward life first manifested.

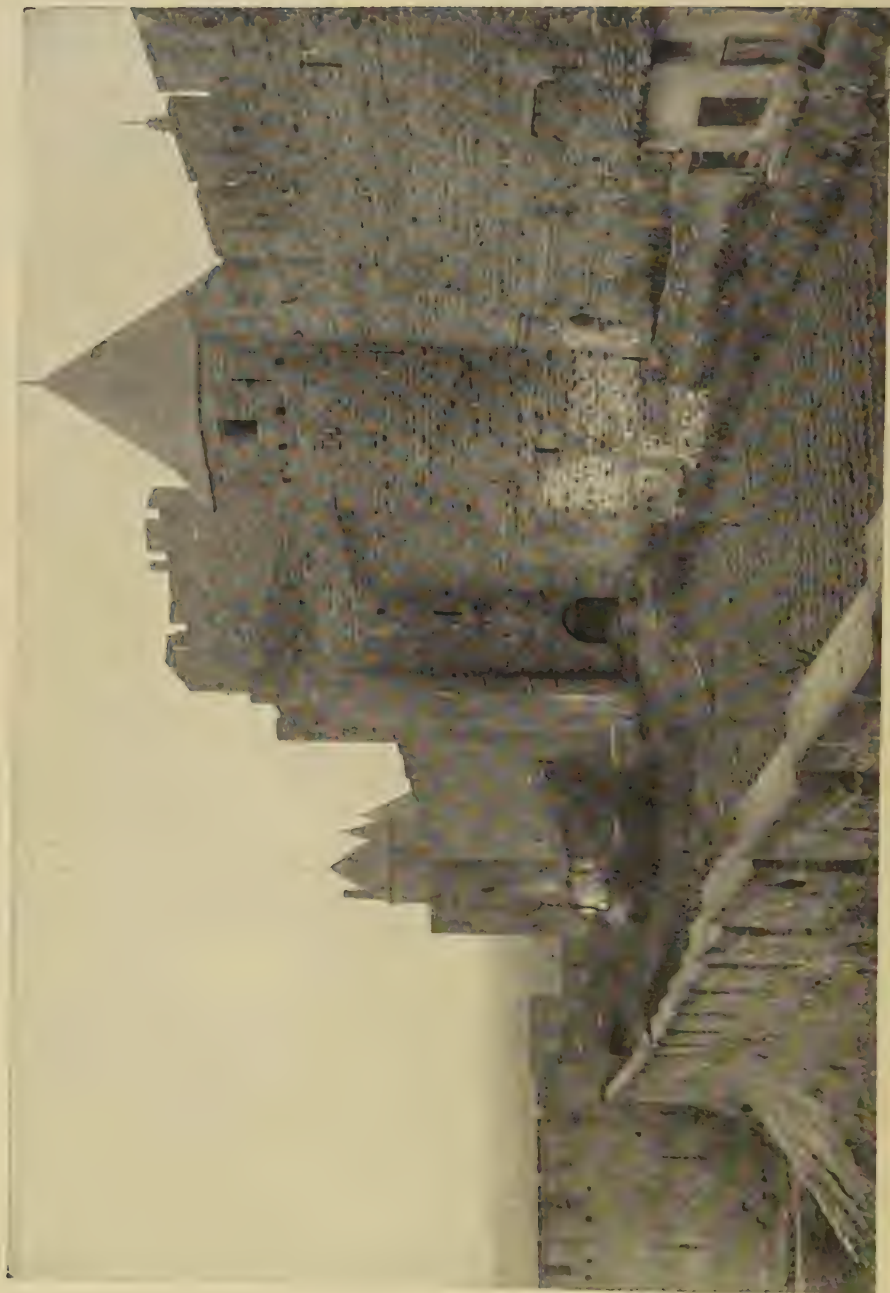
The gradual disintegration of the great Empire has been likened to the weathering away of some old building. After its massive frame was gone and its wide domains had been appropriated by barbaric tribes that surged to and fro, remnants of its institutions still survived.

The earliest use of the expression *media tempestas* was made in the fifteenth century, when a classical revival had led men to fancy that a strong bond existed between them and the Greeks and Romans. In their enthusiasm over the recovery of Hellenic and Latin writings, they passed over the intervening years that separated them from classical times and characterized the interim as "middle ages" dividing the ancients from themselves, a period so chaotic, barbaric and confused withal that it might well be forgotten. Spring had finally come to the earth, long held in the monotonous clutch of winter. Such a notion of the centuries that followed the collapse of Rome survived until recently. Only with the understanding of the last fifty years has the profound significance of this formerly obscure period been realized. Text-books not many years ago referred to these early centuries as the *Dark Ages*, an expression less heard since a modern educator humorously said they were "so-called because we were in the dark concerning them."

No records survive of an age more confused than that following the end of Roman government, in some ways similar to the remote times in which Dorians and other Hellenic tribes pressed into southern Europe, killing and displacing earlier occupants of Greece, pillaging and destroying as they went. Teutonic tribes had been impatiently waiting opportunity to force their way into the Italian peninsula. Army after army had been sacrificed by the Empire to hold them beyond the frontiers. Wondrous tales had reached them of fertile fields, endless wealth, huge buildings and curious customs in the smiling southland, brought by kinsmen who, having been taken prisoners and sold as slaves in Rome, evaded their owners and escaped to their primeval forests. Since the time of Cæsar, Germans had served in the Roman army. For generations they had tried in vain to force their way into the enchanted country. At last the vigilant legions melted away and the wanderings of the nations began, to continue for three hundred years.

Imagine what would be the result today were the most stable governments to collapse after the decimations of war, while uncivilized hordes poured over the borders. So it was in Rome when, weakened by struggles within and without, as well as by the vices of a decaying civilization, the legions were finally unable to withstand the onslaught of a new, vigorous race. The government ceased to function and the country was given over to pillage and destruction. Those who survived the repeated invasions of devastating hordes, each outdoing the last in deeds of violence, were stunned into inactivity. Finally few remained who had ever known existence under order and good government. It is said that the population of Rome sank to a few hundred. Yet, in spite of chaos and confusion, the invaders were learning something of the civilization they destroyed. The period of assimilation was fairly well over when the Frankish king Charlemagne created a Germanic empire, calling it Roman, after the greatest empire the world has ever known.

It is safe to say that many who possess a fair acquaintance with the history of ancient and modern times have but vague ideas concerning the trend of events during the Middle Ages. Historians, formerly absorbed with political de-



THE WALLS OF CARCASSONE, THE BEST-PRESERVED MEDIEVAL TOWN IN EXISTENCE

velopment to the exclusion of all beside, have fostered the notion that these centuries were filled for the most part with clashes between Church and State. Just as it has latterly been shown that, Gibbon to the contrary, no country can "decline" for five hundred years, so it is becoming more and more evident that the Middle Ages were not wholly chaotic. This was the time of knighthood and chivalry, of crusades, of cathedral building and the making of hand-illuminated books. It was the time when castles towered and "barons held their sway," the age of miracle plays, guilds, and stories that will never die.

Travelers today stand in wonder before Gothic cathedral churches that "died from their love of light." Old abbeys, ruined castles, mosaics, stained glass windows are all mute witnesses of an age utterly unlike our own. To adequately comprehend these mediæval monuments it is necessary to understand the ideals that animated their builders.

Having assimilated the culture of earlier nations, Rome spread it broadcast over the civilized world. Dying, she left it for Germanic tribes, as yet untouched by the devitalizing forces of civilization, to take up the torch of progress. When these new peoples had absorbed much of her culture and had adapted her institutions to their own use, there followed the rise of modern nations and the beginnings of modern tongues. To understand this formative period is the better to understand ourselves.

THE PRE-CHRISTIAN WORLD

MANY are the explanations that have been offered for the collapse of so mighty a political organization as that of the Roman Empire. Gibbon traced its gradual decline through five centuries. "Certain people accept as the final cause the invasions of the Barbarians, forgetting that it then becomes necessary to explain how such a mighty Empire, which at that time was the custodian of the treasure of all military science, suddenly became incapable of defending its frontiers against a people who had learned from itself the rudiments of the art of war and of government. Others attribute this ruin to Christianity; others again to the preponderance which the inferior classes and the more barbarous people obtained in the Empire; others again to the over-powering weight of the taxes and the absolute nature of the government."^x Ferrero finds the solution in the humiliation which befell the senate in the first half of the third century. As a rule modern historians, following the great Mommsen, have regarded the senate as leading but a shadowy existence after the end of the Republic, despite the fact that Augustus continually deferred to it for sanction to his actions. Under his immediate successors its authority was seriously curtailed. Vespasian restored it to dignity and power, infusing into it new life that insured its vitality for generations after. He brought into Rome a thousand aristocratic families from the provinces, where the Roman traditions were more loyally cherished than in the capital itself. Thus the Roman aristocracy once more became an important social and political factor.

The greatest inherent weakness in the Principate—or Empire, as it tended to become—was lack of fixed succession. Many of the emperors left no issue and in any event the established method of securing a successor upon the death of an emperor was for the senate to affirm the nomi-

nation he had previously presented to it, senatorial confirmation being essential to election. Ferrero maintains that so long as the senate remained the stable element of government no serious harm befell the empire, but when it was set aside and force substituted to set up rulers, whether employed by the candidate himself or by the legions, the death knell of the Empire was sounded.

"The ruin of the ancient civilization is therefore the effect of slow decadence due to internal causes and to a terrible accident which destroyed at one fell blow the keystone of the arch of all legal order, and threw that civilization, already weakened by its own weight and by its internal decadence, into the convulsions of revolutionary despotism."¹

Christianity created slight stir in the world until the third century. During the hundred years that followed it gained official recognition. It is therefore instructive to survey the state of affairs and the trend of religious thought before this new religion, which was to prove so important in future history, had acquired a firm footing among men.

In early times the native Roman deities were inseparably related to state and government, while the gods of the household and the fields held first place in the hearts of the people. No public action was begun without first taking the *auspices* to ascertain whether or not such action was in accordance with the will of the gods who watched over the fortunes of the Roman state. While there are plenty of evidences that state worship became perfunctory as time went on and thought widened, still during the Republic no radical changes in established customs took place. It is true that Greek philosophies permeated the civilized world and found eager reception among the educated classes, while Roman legions came more and more to be recruited from the provinces wherein numerous religions prevailed. Rome had no quarrel with any national religion. As soon as new peoples were conquered, the statues of their deities were set up in the Roman capital. In turn it was thought but reasonable that these worshippers so annexed should do reverence to the gods who presided over Rome.

In spite of the fact that temples were built to the ancient

gods during the early Empire as never before, due to abundant riches which made vast building enterprises possible, the faith which had characterized the early Republic was forever gone. Philosophy, with its searching questions, had undermined the gods who had become confused with Greek deities and lacked reality. Eastern cults, brought to Rome first by captives, who it must always be remembered might be highly educated, by soldiers and merchants, gained ground steadily. To compensate in some measure for the lack of devotion now evinced to the ancient divinities, Augustus established emperor worship, less for the purpose of glorifying mortals than for stimulating patriotism for the genius of Rome. We today symbolize our country under the name Columbia and exalt its high position by glorifying this name. Similarly, in worshipping the emperor, the people revered the position of him who was first in the state, or such at least was the underlying conception. There is no doubt but that certain later emperors wished to strengthen their positions by exacting the deference commonly accorded monarchs in Oriental countries, where they were regarded as God's representative on earth and therefore themselves objects of worship. Domitian and Diocletian offer striking examples of this attitude.

During the later Republic the taking of the *auspices* was still adhered to, not now for the purpose of discerning the will of the god, but for the same reason that filibustering is resorted to in legislative bodies today: for the purpose of delaying or preventing legislation or definite action on public questions. Although the returning conqueror still wended his way through the Via Sacra to lay a goodly portion of his spoils on the altar of Jupiter Capitolinus, it was only among the simple people in rural districts that faith in the old gods survived. In the cities, especially in Rome, in the legions along the frontiers and among the returning soldiers, Oriental cults were growing stronger and stronger. With feverish unrest, so characteristic of the times, there was a tireless search for new paths to peace. Yet on the surface no particular indication of this was apparent.

Contrasting conditions before the humiliation of the sen-

ate with those obtaining fifty years later, Ferrero draws the following graphic picture:

“When, in the year 235, the Emperor Alexander Severus was killed by his revolted legions, the ancient civilization was still intact in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia. In the recesses of their temples, which had been erected or restored in the course of three centuries, with all the magnificence for which the growth of an increasing prosperity gave warrant, the gods of the Greek or Roman polytheism and the native divinities, Hellenized or Romanized, of the provinces watched over the social order of the whole Empire. From the fertile womb of polytheism a new cult even had been born during these centuries, the cult of Rome and Augustus, which still symbolized at the opening of the third century, on the banks of the Rhine and the Euphrates, the majestic unity of the Empire. A kind of cosmopolitan mixture, thick and colored, composed of Hellenism, Romanism, and Orientalism, a civilization brilliant and superficial, spread like a priceless glaze on rustic pottery over the Empire.

“Two aristocracies, one imperial, which resided in Rome, the other provincial, which had its home in the secondary towns, were prepared by Greek culture, by Roman culture, or by the two together, to govern the Empire with wisdom, justice, and magnificence. The fine arts—sculpture, painting and architecture—flourished, although, in satisfying the taste of a public so vast and so cosmopolitan, they had lost the simplicity and purity of the great epochs. Philosophy and literature were cultivated with zeal, although without great originality, by a growing crowd of men and women of the middle and superior classes. . . .

“The large and small towns in all the provinces vied with each other in the construction of the most beautiful buildings, in establishing schools, in organizing sumptuous fêtes and ceremonies, in encouraging the studies most in favor at the time, and in making provision for the well-being of the poorer classes. Agriculture, industry and commerce flourished. . . .

“Fifty years later, all this was changed. The Greco-Roman civilization and polytheism were in their death-

agonies. The gods fled from their deserted and crumbling temples to take refuge in the country. The refined aristocracies which governed the Empire with so much magnificence and justice, and which had erected the great monument of national law, had disappeared. . . . The Western provinces, including Gaul and Italy, were almost completely ruined. The countryside and the smaller towns were depopulated, and what remained of men and riches went to swell the congestion in the large centers; the precious metals disappeared; agriculture, industry and commerce degenerated, and the arts and sciences were in abeyance."²

Numerous were the Oriental religions that had found their way to Rome in the two preceding centuries. Isis had come from Egypt. As she restored life to Osiris, it was taught that she might do so for all men. A description of the rites of this cult has come down in a work by Apuleius, cited by Dr. Lindsey in the *Cambridge Mediæval History*. "He has described, with a vividness that makes us see them, the stately processions which moved with deliberate pace through the crowded streets of Oriental towns, and drew after them to the temple many a hitherto unattached inquirer. We can enter the temple with him and listen to the solemn exhortation of the high-priest; hear him dwell upon the past sins and follies of the neophyte and the unfailing goodness and mercy of the goddess whose eyes had followed him through them all and who now waited to receive him if he truly desired to become her disciple and worshipper. The initiation was a secret rite and Apuleius is careful not to profane it by description; but we learn that there was a baptism, a fast of ten days, a course of priestly instruction, sponsors given to the neophyte, and, in the evening, a reception of the new brother by the congregation, when everyone greeted him kindly and presented him with some small gift."³

So had the worship of Isis developed from the ancient Egyptian Osirian cult and undergone various modifications by its contact with other Asiatic religions. So was it brought to the great capital to attract those who were being initiated into first one Oriental cult, then another, which in turn

offered "escape from guilt, communion with the deity and immortality."

The Magna Mater, brought from Phrygia to Rome under the direction of an oracle in days of the Republic, had caused dismay to the senate when it was disclosed that in her native land the goddess was worshipped with wild orgies. To meet the peculiar situation, priests were imported who were commissioned to worship her in behalf of the state, while all Romans were forbidden to participate in her ceremonials; with the laxity of the times she now came to have many devotees among them.

The emperor Aurelian instituted the cult of Mithraism, identifying it with *Sol Invictus*, or the Invincible Sun. Mithras was a Persian god of light, popular with the army and long worshipped in Rome. It is probable that Aurelian planned to substitute the theory of divine right of kings for the approval of the senate, seldom sought in his time. In Persia, where this religion grew up, the ruler was accepted as the representative of God on earth and in the minds of the people this was equivalent to being himself a deity. Such a doctrine, if once adopted by the Romans, would convert the Empire into a hereditary state. Diocletian did everything within his power to impress this theory upon the people. It will be remembered that Alexander the Great was first to import this Asiatic conception into Europe and that it was still voiced at the beginning of the twentieth century by the German emperor, who declared that his right to rule came not from the people but from God himself.

The blood of the bull was believed to give redemption from sin; the adherents of Mithraism partook of a symbolic meal of bread and water; they had a ritual and met in underground chambers for secret meetings. Legend said that Mithras had been born in a cave, of a virgin.

He was praised in song and ritual. Before Christianity was scarcely known this religion, several hundred years older, appealed to the soldiers and counted its followers in the Roman Empire by the thousands. Modern excavations have revealed numerous centers of the cult in Rome, several in the sea-port Ostia, while inscriptions in military camps

and as far away as Britain testify to its wide popularity.

While many of the wealthy, governed largely by their emotions, took the precaution to espouse several of the prevailing cults, the intellectual had recourse to philosophy. Of all Greek philosophies Stoicism was best suited to the Roman temperament and voiced the loftiest conceptions of pre-Christian thought. We have seen that it was taught by Zeno in the third century before Christ and spread into Rome in the late Republic. It met the needs of those dark days when fickle and insane emperors played with power as with a toy. When life seemed to hang on a slender thread, this doctrine taught that all men were morally free, all children of God. Stoicism said that all men were brothers and that difference in class or station was purely accidental. *To follow reason* was held to be man's noblest duty, while life or death were immaterial. These lofty conceptions supported Seneca while he waited in his luxurious palace for the summons he knew must ere long command him to take his life, his fortune being great enough to excite the cupidity of Nero. Marcus Aurelius was perhaps the noblest Stoic of them all and his *Thoughts* have been the consolation of people for fifteen hundred years.

Neo-Platonism appealed to scholars. Having its origin in Alexandria, it spread to many cultural centers. Though based on the teachings of Plato it was eclectic. It surveyed philosophy as a whole and its teachings differed from those of earlier systems. There is no question but that the early Christian Fathers were much affected by the doctrines of this School. Boëthius spent his time in prison writing his *Consolations of Philosophy*, a work which was widely read in the Middle Ages.

In the very nature of things these philosophies interested only the educated classes. For the masses something more definite and tangible than philosophical deductions was required.

Just as the conquests of Alexander the Great had caused the spread of Greek culture wherever Hellenes penetrated, so that cities in remote parts of Western Asia have yielded architectural remains conforming to those of Athens itself,

similarly, the wide reach of Roman arms had facilitated rapid intercommunion of thought by the close of the last century before Christ.

“By the time of the founding of the first Christian Church the immense conquests of Rome had greatly extended and established the process. The Mediterranean had become a great Roman lake. Merchant ships and routes of traffic crossed it in all directions; tourists visited its shores. The known world had become one. The numberless peoples, tribes, nations, societies within the girdle of the Empire, with their various languages, creeds, customs, religions, philosophies, were profoundly influencing each other. A great fusion was taking place; and it was becoming inevitable that the next great religious movement would have a world-wide character.

“It was probable that this new religion would combine many elements from the preceding rituals in one cult. In connection with the fine temples and elaborate services of Isis and Cybele and Mithra there was growing up a powerful priesthood. . . . It was also probable that this new religion would show a reaction against mere sex-indulgence and, as regards its standard of morality generally, that, among so many conflicting peoples with their various civic and local customs, it could not well identify itself with any *one* of these but would evolve an inner inspiration of its own which in its best form would be love of the neighbor, regardless of the race, creed or customs of the neighbor, and whose sanction would not reside in any of the external authorities thus conflicting with each other but in the sense of the soul’s direct responsibility to God.”⁴

Of wars and revolutions Rome had suffered not a few. Disease and pestilence she had already experienced. Despotic rulers had oppressed the provinces with taxes, and barbarians had restlessly waited to set out on the march the moment defenses along the frontiers might weaken. Inertia on the part of her own citizens had long forced her to draw her soldiery from among the more stalwart provincials. Social vices had been steadily gnawing at the vitals of society ever since the unprecedented wealth of foreign conquests swept away the simplicity and austerity of early

Republican days. The Republic had come to an end because the proletariat was incapable of self government, because the fine type of citizen had been sacrificed on the altar of Mars and wasted in civic brawls. Now, in the latter days of imperialism, it boded ill that the morality of the people was being further corrupted by Oriental cults regarding which ignorant devotees invariably adopted the crassest rather than the more exalted conceptions. Rome sadly needed a faith to bind her people together, as in olden times. This faith was already spreading among the lowly but before it had wrought its great work the Empire perished.

¹Ferrero: *Ruin of Ancient Civilization*, p. 39.

²Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 6.

³Cambridge Med. Hist., p. 90.

⁴Carpenter: *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 200.

^zSee Ferrero's excellent discussion in the *Ruin of Ancient Civilization*.

PHILOSOPHY OF TWO GREAT STOICS

FROM THE THOUGHTS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

BEGIN the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not only of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in the same intelligence and the same portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.

* * * * *

Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it.

Unhappy am I, because this has happened to me—Not so, but Happy am I, though this has happened to me, because I continue free from pain, neither crushed by the present nor fearing the future. For such a thing as this might have happened to every man; but every man would not have continued free from pain on such an occasion. Why then is that rather a misfortune than this a good fortune? And dost thou in all cases call that a man's misfortune, which is not a deviation from man's nature? And does a thing seem to thee to be a deviation from man's nature, when it is not contrary to the will of man's nature?

Well, thou knowest the will of nature. Will then this which has happened prevent thee from being just, magnanimous, temperate, prudent, secure against inconsiderate opinions and falsehood; will it prevent thee from having modesty, freedom, and everything else, by the presence of which man's nature obtains all that is its own? Remember too on every occasion which leads thee to vexation to apply this principle: not that this is a misfortune, but that to bear it nobly is good fortune.

* * * * *

In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present—I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bed-clothes and keep myself warm?—But this is more pleasant—Dost thou exist then to take thy pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion? Dost thou not see the little plants, the little birds, the ants, the spiders, the bees working together to put in order their several parts of the universe? And art thou unwilling to do the work of a human being, and dost thou not make haste to do that which is according to thy nature?—But it is necessary to take rest also—It is necessary: however nature has fixed bounds to this too: she has fixed bounds both to eating and drinking, and yet thou goest beyond these bounds, beyond what is sufficient; yet in thy acts it is not so, but thou stoppest short of what thou canst do. So thou lovest not thyself, for if thou didst, thou wouldst love thy nature and her will. But those who love their several arts exhaust themselves in working at them unwashed and without food; but thou valuest thy own nature less than the turner values the turning art, or the dancer the dancing art, or the lover of money values his money, or the vain-glorious man his little glory. And such men, when they have a violent affection to a thing, choose neither to eat nor to sleep rather than to perfect the things which they care for. But are the acts which concern society more vile in thy eyes and less worthy of thy labour?

How easy it is to repel and to wipe away every impression which is troublesome or unsuitable, and immediately to be in all tranquillity.

* * * * *

Judge every word and deed which are according to nature to be fit for thee; and be not diverted by the blame which follows from any people nor by their words, but if a thing is good to be done or said, do not consider it unworthy of thee. For those persons have their peculiar leading principle and follow their peculiar movement; which things do not thou regard, but go straight on, following thy own nature and the common nature; and the way of both is one.

* * * * *

The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrong doer.

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It is a ridiculous thing for a man not to fly from his own badness, which is indeed possible, but to fly from other men's badness, which is impossible.

* * * * *

This is the chief thing: Be not perturbed, for all things are according to the nature of the universal; and in a little time thou wilt be nobody and nowhere, like Hadrianus and Augustus. In the next place having fixed thy eyes steadily on thy business look at it, and at the same time remembering that it is thy duty to be a good man, and what man's nature demands, do that without turning aside; and speak as it seems to thee most just, only let it be with a good disposition and with modesty and without hypocrisy.

* * * * *

Nothing can happen to any man which is not a human accident, nor to an ox which is not according to the nature of an ox, nor to a vine which is not according to the nature of a vine, nor to a stone which is not proper to a stone. If then there happens to each thing both what is usual and

natural, why shouldst thou complain? For the common nature brings nothing which may not be borne by thee.

If thou art pained by any external thing, it is not this thing that disturbs thee, but thy own judgment about it. And it is in thy power to wipe out this judgment now. But if anything in thy own disposition gives thee pain, who hinders thee from correcting thy opinion? And even if thou art pained because thou art not doing some particular thing which seems to thee to be right, why dost thou not rather act than complain?

* * * * *

A cucumber is bitter—Throw it away.—There are briars in the road—Turn aside from them.—This is enough. Do not add, And why were such things made in the world? For thou wilt be ridiculed by a man who is acquainted with nature, as thou wouldst be ridiculed by a carpenter and shoemaker if thou didst find fault because thou seest in their workshop shavings and cuttings from the things they make. And yet they have places into which they can throw these shavings and cuttings, and the universal nature has no external space; but the wondrous part of her art is that though she has circumscribed herself, everything within her which appears to decay and to grow old and to be useless she changes into herself, and again makes other new things from these very same, so that she requires neither substance from without nor wants a place into which she may cast that which decays. She is content then with her own space, and her own matter and her own art.

* * * * *

No longer talk at all about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such.

* * * * *

Socrates used to say, What do you want? Souls of rational men or irrational?—Souls of rational men—Of what rational men? Sound or unsound?—Sound—Why then do you not seek for them?—But we have them—Why then do you fight and quarrel?

Cast away opinion: thou art saved. Who then hinders thee from casting it away?

* * * * *

The safety of life is this, to examine everything all through, what it is itself, what is its material, what the formal part; with all thy soul to do justice and to say the truth. What remains except to enjoy life by joining one good thing to another so as not to leave even the smallest intervals between?*

* Long's Trans.

FROM EPICTETUS

Men are disturbed not by the things which happen, but by the opinions about the things: for example, death is nothing terrible, for if it were, it would have seemed so to Socrates; for the opinion about death, that it is terrible, is the terrible thing. When then we are impeded or disturbed or grieved, let us never blame others, but ourselves, that is, our opinions. It is the act of an ill-instructed man to blame others for his own bad condition; it is the act of one who has begun to be instructed, to lay the blame on himself; and of one whose instruction is completed, neither to blame another, nor himself.

* * * * *

Seek not that the things which happen should happen as you wish; but wish the things which happen to be as they are, and you will have a tranquil flow of life.

* * * * *

If you would have your children and your wife and your friends to live for ever, you are silly; for you would have the things which are not in your power to be in your power, and the things which belong to others to be yours. So if you would have your slave to be free from faults, you are a fool; for you would have badness not to be badness, but something else. But if you wish not to fail in your desires, you are able to do that. Practise then this which you are able to do. He is the master of every man who has the

power over the things, which another person wishes or does not wish, the power to confer on him or to take them away. Whoever then wishes to be free, let him neither wish for anything nor avoid anything which depends on others: if he does not observe this rule, he must be a slave.

* * * * *

Remember that it is not he who reviles you or strikes you, who insults you, but it is your opinion about these things as being insulting. When then a man irritates you, you must know that it is your own opinion which has irritated you. Therefore especially try not to be carried away by the appearance. For if you once gain time and delay, you will more easily master yourself.

* * * * *

If a man has reported to you, that a certain person speaks ill of you, do not make any defence (answer) to what has been told you: but reply, The man did not know the rest of my faults, for he would not have mentioned these only.

* * * * *

When you have decided that a thing ought to be done and are doing it, never avoid being seen doing it, though the many shall form an unfavorable opinion about it. For if it is not right to do it, avoid doing the thing; but if it is right, why are you afraid of those who shall find fault wrongly?

* * * * *

Every thing has two handles, the one by which it may be borne, the other by which it may not. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold of the act by that handle wherein he acts unjustly, for this is the handle which cannot be borne: but lay hold of the other, that he is your brother, that he was nurtured with you, and you will lay hold of the thing by that handle by which it can be borne.

* * * * *

The condition and characteristic of an uninstructed person is this: he never expects from himself profit (advan-

tage) nor harm, but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher is this: he expects all advantage and all harm from himself. The signs (marks) of one who is making progress are these: he censures no man, he praises no man, he blames no man, he accuses no man, he says nothing about himself as if he were somebody or knew something; when he is impeded at all or hindered, he blames himself: if a man praises him, he ridicules the praiser to himself: if a man censures him, he makes no defence: he goes about like weak persons, being careful not to move any of the things which are placed, before they are firmly fixed: he removes all desire from himself, and he transfers aversion to those things only of the things within our power which are contrary to nature: he employs a moderate movement towards every thing: whether he is considered foolish or ignorant, he cares not: and in a word he watches himself as if he were an enemy and lying in ambush.

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It is circumstances (difficulties) which show what men are. Therefore when a difficulty falls upon you, remember that God, like a trainer of wrestlers, has matched you with a rough young man. For what purpose? you may say. Why that you may become an Olympic conqueror; but it is not accomplished without sweat. In my opinion no man has had a more profitable difficulty than you have had, if you choose to make use of it as an athlete would deal with a young antagonist. We are now sending a scout to Rome; but no man sends a cowardly scout, who, if he only hears a noise and sees a shadow anywhere, comes running back in terror and reports that the enemy is close at hand. So now if you should come and tell us Fearful is the state of affairs at Rome; terrible is death, terrible is exile; terrible is calumny; terrible is poverty; fly, my friends; the enemy is near—we shall answer, Be gone, prophesy for yourself; we have committed only one fault, that we sent such a scout.

Diogenes, who was sent as a scout before you, made a different report to us. He says that death is no evil, for

neither is it base: he says that fame (reputation) is the noise of madmen. And what has this spy said about pain, about pleasure, and about poverty? He says that to be naked is better than any purple robe, and to sleep on the bare ground is the softest bed; and he gives as a proof of each thing that he affirms his own courage, his tranquillity, his freedom, and the healthy appearance and compactness of his body. There is no enemy near, he says; all is peace. How so, Diogenes? See, he replies, if I am struck, if I have been wounded, if I have fled from any man. This is what a scout ought to be. But you come to us and tell us one thing after another. Will you not go back, and you will see clearer when you have laid aside fear?

What then shall I do? What do you do when you leave a ship? Do you take away the helm or the oars? What then do you take away? You take what is your own, your bottle and your wallet; and now if you think of what is your own, you will never claim what belongs to others.*

* Long's Trans.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

CHRIST was born at a peculiar time in the world's history. The ancient gods had largely fallen into neglect. Hellenistic culture reached over Southern Europe and Western Asia, while Rome dominated civilized countries.

Palestine had been politically dependent most of the time since the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century B. C. Assyrian rule had followed Babylonian and both given way to Persian. After a century of independence under the Maccabees from 167 to 63 B. C., first the Ptolemies and then the Selucidae had governed the little land. Religious freedom had nevertheless prevailed. Hellenistic thought penetrated all parts of Western Asia and many Jews were educated in Athens and other Greek cities; consequently the ancient Hebrew faith had not remained untouched by changing thought. At this particular period Tiberius ruled in Rome and the publicans collected imperial taxes.

The Jews who dwelt in Palestine were divided into three general parties and several sects. The Sadducees composed the aristocratic, conservative faction. The word Sadducee is supposed to have been derived from one Zadok, a high priest in the reign of Solomon, from whose line the hereditary priests traced their descent. They stood for the ancient faith, rejecting much traditional lore that had become interwoven with it. They were worldly, wealthy and were not held in favor by the masses. The Pharisees were the first "Separatists" of whom we have record. They held aloof from "the people of the land"—not merely those of alien race and customs but from those of their own race who did not interpret the law or rigidly observe the same ceremonials as they. They regarded righteousness as dependent upon the unfailling washing of hands, vessels, repetitions of ritual and the like. Finally, the Zealots were the

extremists who desired political independence of Rome. It was their policy and actions which finally precipitated the war of 66-70 which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman legions under the command of Titus. Although feeling often ran high between the Sadducees and Pharisees, they together opposed Christ whose teachings were at wide variance with their own. Legal advisors of the priests and interpreters to the number of seventy-one made up the Sanhedrim, the highest Jewish tribunal.

After the Hebrews had been allowed to return to their country in the time of Cyrus the Great, a wave of deep religious fervor swept over them. This found expression in the zeal with which the temple was rebuilt and persisted for some considerable time. Gradually it abated and survived only among small non-secular groups. One brotherhood at least existed in Palestine—the Essenes, first of celibate orders known in Mediterranean lands. The main settlement of this order was on the shores of the Dead Sea. Stress was placed upon righteousness; the Essenes taught love of God, of virtue and of man. Ablutions were a part of their rigorous discipline. Their food was prepared in a special way by priests. Sexual intercourse was strictly forbidden. Property and labor were held in common, agriculture being their chief occupation. They baptised their initiates with water. John the Baptist belonged to this brotherhood, which in its teachings gave evidence of influence from doctrines of Buddha. With the scattering of the Jews in all directions it was inevitable that they should have contracted numerous Eastern religions. The view of the married state as being sullied was entirely foreign to the ancient Hebrews and likewise to the Persians. It was held however by brotherhoods existing among the followers of Buddha. Undoubtedly various teachings of the Essenes were incorporated into Christianity.

As a background then for the new religion, which had its beginnings in the teachings of Christ, we find the Hebrews, discontented with Roman rule and divided among themselves, their country permeated with Hellenistic conceptions; the Greeks, fallen away from their early deities, absorbed with various philosophies and foreign cults; the

Romans, rulers of the civilized world, feverishly seeking among Oriental religions something to replace their one-time faith in the ancient gods. Beyond the arena of world activities the Germanic peoples were still held by the vigilance of Roman legions; yet they were shortly to become the main factor in the population of Europe.

Christ left no writings. His teachings were imparted by word of mouth by his disciples and ready converts were won among the simple and lowly. After his death followed the *Age of Waiting*, for it was believed he would come again, within the lifetime of many who had known him. During the first century the faithful gathered for the singing of songs, encouragement and to partake of the bread and wine, in memory of the Last Supper. The apostles or their representatives exhorted the followers to be faithful and kept the instructions of their founder before them. Organization was of the slightest. The services were congregational; alms were collected for the poor; new converts were cheered and news was received from other groups of the sect. The faith attracted little attention in Rome, whither it was brought first by Jewish slaves. It was assumed that it was a Jewish religion and Rome opposed no national religions—only sects.

Secret societies were forbidden; burial societies were alone allowed to flourish and were in the nature of fraternal insurance agencies for the purpose of providing decent burial for the poor. These afforded one means of spreading this faith which appealed to the lowly and downcast, for whom life was precarious at best. Hope was held out to the despairing, while the upper classes gave scant attention to a religion whose ranks were filled by the humble and the poor.

By the second century changes had taken place both within and without Christian ranks. His followers realized that Christ had not meant that he would return at once; consequently stronger organization was needed among them. The apostles died and others took their places in presiding over their meetings. Elders or *presbyters* instructed the new converts; *deacons* made up the executive staff, collecting alms for the needy, sending relief to other

Christian communities if they were oppressed. Over several churches bishops were stationed. They were chosen for life and soon became very influential since they nominated the deacons and presbyters. It was in the nature of the case that the bishops, located in the great cities, should take the initiative and that they should be deferred to in general meetings. So it came about that the bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Corinth and Rome presently became the chief spokesmen of the Church.

It became known in the second century that Christianity was not a Jewish religion and consequently it began to go hard with the followers of the faith. It is doubtful whether the violence visited upon them during the reign of Nero can be considered a religious persecution. Finding himself severely criticized because Rome suffered a serious fire, and knowing that rumor credited him with having instigated it because he was known to covet the devastated area for his building projects, Nero cast about for some scapegoat. It was said that his servants had been seen in the burning districts, which was true; they had tried to extinguish the flames. Instead of promptly disavowing any connection with the fire, Nero laid the blame upon the Christians and had many of them put to cruel deaths. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to presume that any other despised and insignificant group would have served his purpose quite as well.

The situation had now changed. The adherents of Christianity were increasing rapidly and were claiming recruits from all classes. Viewed from the standpoint of the Romans, this was a dangerous condition of affairs. These people were intolerant of other religions; they refused to attend the State festivals or share in Emperor worship, which, as we have seen, was doing reverence to the genius of Rome through the worship of its highest representative. By the Romans this was considered nothing short of treason. Their faith taught Christians to adjure political office. The State was but temporary. They were concerned with eternal matters. Each was instructed to live in peace with his neighbor; he was not to serve as a judge, nor to have any part in the administration of a sinful world; whether the government was good or bad, he was to concern himself

with saving his soul. At no time had the Romans been concerned with doctrine nor did they now investigate the doctrine of this new religion. From the standpoint of the State views of this kind were pernicious and endangered the welfare of the Empire; hence they must be stamped out. To this end a law was passed making it a crime to become a Christian. Yet, despite oppression and violence the faith continued to spread.

“One can easily imagine the effect on the highest minds of such doctrines at a time when the conduct of public functions had become difficult and dangerous: when the barbarous races were seizing the State and the more violent qualities of the human spirit were becoming more and more necessary for carrying on the government. Christianity was destroying the Empire by abstention. . . . The army suffered from this systematic abstention still more severely than the civil employments. Already in the second century Christianity had declared that it was not permissible to be a ‘man of the sword’ and that the ‘son of peace’ who must not even engage in a lawsuit, could still less take part in a battle. . . .

“The canons of the Church of Alexandria gave their counsel against the volunteer—a foundation of the Roman army—and affirmed with authority that it does not become Christians to bear arms. . . . St. Augustine finally demonstrated a little later on that it is quite indifferent for a Christian if he lives under one government or another, whether he obeys the Empire or the Barbarians, provided that the State does not force him into any impiety or sin.”¹

The Younger Pliny appealed to the Emperor Trajan for further instruction as to how to deal with the Christians in his province. This ruler, one of the best that the Empire ever knew, told him not to go out of his way to punish them but that if they were brought before him they must either pledge their allegiance to the State—which involved reverence to the spirit of Rome as represented in emperor worship—or be dealt with accordingly.

As a rule it was left for the administrators of the provinces to meet the situation as they would. Except for pronounced persecutions which occurred from time to time, it

largely depended upon the personal attitude of the governor. Some were lenient; others oppressive. It has well been said that while modern newspapers may be unreliable, mere rumor is worse by far. The wildest stories were circulated by followers of other religions; they accused Christians of sacrificing children, of causing droughts, war and misfortunes of any and all kinds. Further, it must be admitted these early Christians were often divided among themselves. Each felt his views or interpretations to be right and those of others heretical. Under such conditions each faction would bring accusations against the others.

Marcus Aurelius was one of the mildest and most high-minded of all Roman rulers, exception being made to none. Yet he thought it incumbent upon him to preserve peace in the State and felt that the Christians were a menacing factor to be crushed. Under Diocletian bitter persecutions were waged. Yet the "blood of the martyr was the seed of the Church."

In excavating a village in Egypt a document was recently found indicative of the far-reaching effect of imperial persecutions. This testified to the renunciation of the faith by a convert who found the strain too great when royal edicts authorized the confiscation of all property of Christians and punishment of those who clung to the faith in spite of it being forbidden. "I have always made offering to the gods, and now, in accordance with the Emperor's orders, have made offering in your presence and have eaten of the offering, and I beg you to bear witness to this fact below. Farewell." It was signed both by the one recanting and by the officer who accepted his testimony. When faced with destruction of family, the ranks were bound to be decimated by those unable to brave the penalties, often death itself. Yet others there were who glorified in death which would bring them immediately into the joys of another life. It puzzled the officials to find these followers of Christ exclaiming, as did a condemned bishop, "Praise be to God," when his sentence was pronounced. Tertullian, citations from whose fearless defense of the faith follow, exclaimed: "We conquer in dying; we go forth victorious at the very time we are subdued. Bound to a half-axle

stake, we are burned in a circle heap of fagots. This is the attitude in which we conquer, it is our victory-robe, it is for us a sort of triumphal car."

Having watched the failure of Diocletian's attempt to suppress the religion by extreme methods it is small wonder that his successor determined not to undertake the impossible.

Few who today belong to the great ranks of Christians would be willing to return to the precepts of the first few centuries. The wonderful adaptability of the religion insured its success. Paul's part in its expansion can scarcely be exaggerated. He it was who held that Christianity was not for Jews only but for the whole world. Having been trained himself in Greek learning, he realized that to endure, Christianity must become universal.

Before the religion could make great headway with the intelligent classes it was necessary to supply arguments and express its principles in terms that could be understood. Whereas in 70 A. D. there were practically no Christian writings, before a hundred years had passed, twenty-one of the twenty-six books of the New Testament had been produced. Whereas the people in the West expressed their zeal in missionary work, spreading the Gospel, in the East men were prone to define terms and to engage in argument. The exact meaning of every word had to be determined; and the nature of God the Father, Christ the Son and their relation to each other were subjects of heated debate. From a simple faith, a complicated system of theology came into being which none but theologians could understand.

Constantine profited by the experiences of his predecessors and granted toleration to the Christians in 311. He needed all the support he could rally and was astute enough to know how firmly he would bind the adherents of the hitherto oppressed faith to him by championing their cause. The claim of divinity of the Emperor was dropped, although other prerogatives of Diocletian were retained. He wished above all things to restore the one-time unity to the Empire and by proclaiming this the new state religion hoped thus to accomplish his end. However, he was soon to find that in the place of old troubles he was surrounded with new

ones. He was destined to learn that this new faith would not prove so ready a tool to a ruler as had ancient beliefs.

Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, being of a logical turn of mind, advanced the idea that Christ, being a Son of God, could not be equal to the Father. Athanasius insisted that Father and Son were equal. Such speculation seemed to Constantine, who was trying to establish order in a State already torn by disintegrating forces, much as it seems to us today, wide of the mark and unnecessary. To people accustomed to the philosophical discussions that had long characterized Hellenistic learning such questions appeared to be momentous indeed, and presently the Emperor found his great kingdom threatened with disruption.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that Constantine, in seeking to reconstitute the unity of the Empire by the aid of Christianity, introduced a new disintegrating force, namely, theological disputes. . . . Synods began to oppose themselves to Synods, men's minds caught fire, theological disputes were followed by brawls and blows and disturbances in the streets. The security which they enjoyed after the triumph of Christianity favored also the explosion of bad passions amongst the Christians. It was not possible for Constantine, who had been strengthened in his efforts to reconstitute the unity of the Empire by the support of the Christians, to accept with indifference a religious crisis which was becoming a civil war. He was himself caught in the toils of these theological disputes. What his political sense thought of them is told in a letter which he addressed to the dissentient Christians.

"I had proposed to lead back to a single form the idea which all people make to themselves of the divinity because I feel strongly that if I could have induced men to come into unison on that subject as was my hope, the conduct of public affairs would have been much facilitated. But, alas, O Divine Goodness, what news has broken so cruelly upon my ears and pierced my heart! I hear that there are more dissensions among you than there were formerly in Africa. And the cause of these seems to me very trifling and quite unworthy of so many fierce contests. . . . Thou Arius, if thou didst have such thought thou shouldst have kept

silence. . . There was no need to make public these questions or the replies to them, since they are problems which there is no call to discuss, which idleness alone suggests, and whose only use is to sharpen men's wits. Is it just, that on account of vain words, you should let strife loose between brothers? . . . Restore to me, I pray, my quiet days and my nights without anxiety so that I may for the future know the charm of the pure joy of life!

"A religion which, instead of assisting the Emperor to govern, created difficulties for him, seemed to his faithful interpretation of Roman thought a monstrous absurdity."²

To restore the peace he convened a council, known from its meeting place as the Council of Nicaea. More than two hundred and fifty bishops attended. Constantine himself opened the meeting which terminated in the decree that Christ was not different from God, but co-substantial with Him. However, this decision was not accepted as final by the Arian faction; instead, for two hundred years it continued to be a matter of dissension and succeeding emperors now favored one side, now another. Like many another dispute that rocked the early Church and threatened it with disruption, it seems to the modern reader inexplicable. Ferrero offers as lucid an explanation as can well be given. In a world of change and turmoil, some there were who were determined to make Christian doctrines definite and certain, to eliminate any possibility of future revelation; to set this forth as beyond the possibility of change. Yet it was its adaptability and flexibility that insured its permanence.

In the first centuries the transition from other religions to this new one was facilitated by the fact that many elements characteristic of older faiths were at once incorporated. The date of the birth of Christ, that had been lost sight of, was announced in the sixth century as being the twenty-fifth of December, a day that had been sacred to religious festival from remote antiquity. In fixing the year error was made, due to the unscientific methods of the times, and authorities differ now as to whether it was four years or seven too late. As to the day of the month which happened to be the same as that celebrated as the natal day of Mithras, St. Augustine said: "We hold the day holy not like

the pagans, because of the birth of the Sun, but because of the birth of him who made it." The Easter festival coincided with another holiday reaching back into obscurity. • Both once celebrated the dying of vegetation and its resurrection in the spring. By giving well-known days Christian significance the way was opened for the ignorant and simple to change from one faith to the other. Various appurtenances of worship were likewise adopted: candles were taken over from the Greek, as was also congregational or choral singing. The conception of angels came from Persia. We have seen that baptism by sacred water was followed by many cults and by the brotherhood of Essenes. It is both interesting and instructive to trace back the various ceremonies and customs which were appropriated by the early Church, thus giving it a universality that could not otherwise have attained. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man had been taught as early as the time of Pythagoras; it was one of the corner stones of Stoicism, but Christianity gave it general acceptance in the world—in theory at least.

Constantine found it impossible to place Christianity on as firm a footing as he wished in the city of Rome, where old traditions and ideas clung so persistently. Further, for political reasons he felt it necessary to be located more conveniently to the East. Therefore he built a new capital on the site of ancient Byzantium. For some time the attempt was made to maintain two capitals, one in the West at Rome; one in the East at Constantinople. Ultimately a separation was bound to come; Roman civilization was perpetuated in the West; Greek civilization survived in the East. Moreover, opportunity was given, in absence of the emperor from Rome, for the Church to gain secular as well as religious power; for, as we shall see, in absence of other authority, the bishop of Rome was besought to give such protection as he was able to the people.

Conditions were reversed when in 394 A. D. Theodosius terminated the Olympian Games which had been held periodically for more than a thousand years. The temple of Serapis had been ordered closed three years earlier, and legal requirement made that citizens should espouse the Christian faith. Transition from earlier faiths to the new

one was accomplished much more quickly in cities than in regions away from the pulse of thought. Presently the word pagan came into being, it being derived from *paganus*, meaning *rural*. In 415 a mob of fanatic Christians put to death the Greek philosopher Hypatia with as great display of violence as those of older religions had ever manifested toward Christianity.

Christian teaching being hostile to all forms of homicide, gladiatorial games and all such dangerous practices were officially ended by the Christian rulers. It was taught that this life is but a preparation for the next; hence to deprive anyone of life was depriving him of a period of needed preparation. One of the greatest contributions made by early Christianity was the sacredness it placed upon human life. It took a decided stand against suicide for the same reason and severe handicaps were sometimes placed upon even the relatives of those who ended their earthly existence. By the seventh century, a foundling home was established to enable mothers to bring the babes they did not wish to keep to the altar. Thus in every direction a new attitude toward life was stimulated.

From such slight beginnings the Christian Church was destined to become one of the greatest factors of the Middle Ages. In the very nature of the case it was bound to conflict with the secular government. In the past historians have made these conflicts the main subject of mediæval interest. It is coming more and more to be seen that political and governmental developments are but threads in the story of human progress and by no means the most instructive for us today.

¹Ferrero: *The Ruin of Ancient Civilization*, Vol. 76, p. 78.

²*Ibid.*, p. 159.

FROM APOLOGETICUS

BY TERTULLIAN

Rulers of the Roman Empire, if, seated for the administration of justice on your lofty tribunal, under the gaze of every eye, and occupying there all but the highest position in the state, you may not openly inquire into and sift before the world the real truth in regard to the charges made against the Christians; if in this case alone you are afraid or ashamed to exercise your authority in making public inquiry with the carefulness which becomes justice; if, finally, the extreme severities inflicted on our people in recently private judgments, stand in the way of our being permitted to defend ourselves before you, you cannot surely forbid the Truth to reach your ears by the secret pathway of a noiseless book.

She has no appeals to make to you in regard of her condition, for that does not excite her wonder. She knows that she is but a sojourner on the earth, and that among strangers she naturally finds foes; and more than that, that her origin, her dwelling-place, her hope, her recompense, her honours, are above. One thing, meanwhile, she anxiously desires of earthly rulers—not to be condemned unknown. What harm can it do to the laws, supreme in their domain, to give her a hearing? Nay, for that part of it, will not their absolute supremacy be more conspicuous in their condemning her, even after she has made her plea? But if unheard sentence is pronounced against her, besides the odium of an unjust deed, they will incur the merited suspicion of doing it with some idea that it is unjust, as not wishing to hear what they may not be able to hear and condemn.

We lay this before you as the first ground on which we urge that your hatred to the name of Christian is unjust. And the very reason which seems to excuse this injustice (I mean ignorance) at once aggravates and convicts it. For what is there more unfair than to hate a thing of which you know nothing, even though it deserve to be hated? Hatred is only merited when it is *known* to be merited. But without that knowledge, whence is its justice to be vindicated?

for that is to be proved, not from the mere fact that an aversion exists, but from acquaintance with the subject. . . .

If it is certain that we are the most wicked of men, why do you treat us so differently from our fellows, that is, from other criminals, it being only fair that the same crime should get the same treatment? When the charges made against us are made against others, they are permitted to make use of both of their own lips and of hired pleaders to show their innocence. They have full opportunity of answer and debate; in fact, it is against the law to condemn anybody undefended and unheard. Christians alone are forbidden to say anything in exculpation of themselves, in defence of the truth, to help the judge to a righteous decision, all that is cared about is having what the public hatred demands—the confession of the name, not examination of the charge; while in your ordinary judicial investigations, on a man's confession of the crime of murder, or sacrilege, or incest, or treason, to take the points of which we are accused, you are not content to proceed at once to sentence—you do not take that step till you thoroughly examine the circumstances of the confession—what is the real character of the deed, how often, where, in what way, when he has done it, who were privy to it, and who actually took part with him in it. . . .

What are we to think of it, that most people so blindly knock their heads against the hatred of the Christian name; that when they bear favourable testimony to any one, they mingle with it abuse of the name he bears? “A good man,” says one, “is Gaius Seius, only that he is a Christian.” So another, “I am astonished that a wise man like Lucius should have suddenly become a Christian.” Nobody thinks it needful to consider whether Gaius is not good and Lucius wise, on this very account that he is a Christian; or a Christian, for the reason that he is wise and good. They praise what they know, they abuse what they are ignorant of, and they inspire their knowledge with their ignorance; though in fairness you should rather judge of what is unknown from what is known, than what is known from what is unknown. . . .

Consult your histories; you will there find that Nero

was the first who assailed with the imperial sword the Christian sect, making progress then especially at Rome. But we glory in having our condemnation hallowed by the hostility of such a wretch. For any one who knows him, can understand that not except as being of singular excellence did anything bring on it Nero's condemnation. Domitian, too, a man of Nero's type in cruelty, tried his hand at persecution; but as he had something of the human in him, he soon put an end to what he had begun, even restoring again those whom he had banished. Such as these have always been our persecutors—men unjust, impious, base, of whom even you yourselves have no good to say, the sufferers under whose sentences you have been wont to restore. . . .

“You do not worship the gods,” you say; “and you do not offer sacrifices for their emperors.” Well, we do not offer sacrifice for others, for the same reason that we do not for ourselves—namely, that your gods are not at all the objects of our worship. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief ground of charge against us—nay, it is the sum-total of our offending; and it is worthy then of being inquired into, if neither prejudice nor injustice be the judge, the one of which has no idea of discovering the truth, and the other simply and at once rejects it. We do not worship your gods, because we know that there are no such beings. This, therefore, is what you should do: you should call on us to demonstrate their non-existence, and thereby prove that they have no claim to adoration; for only if your gods were truly so, would there be any obligation to render divine homage to them. And punishment even were due to Christians, if it were made plain that those to whom they refused all worship were indeed divine. . . .

The object of our worship is the One God, He who by His commanding word, His arranging wisdom, His mighty power, brought forth from nothing this entire mass of our world, with all its array of elements, bodies, spirits, for the glory of His majesty; whence also the Greeks have bestowed on it the name of *Kosmos* [Universal Order]. The eye cannot see Him, though He is (spiritually) visible. He is incomprehensible, though in grace He is manifested. He

is beyond our utmost thought, though our human faculties conceive of Him. He is therefore equally real and great. But that which, in the ordinary sense, can be seen and handled and conceived, is inferior to the eyes by which it is taken in, and the hands by which it is tainted, and the faculties by which it is discovered; but that which is infinite is known only to itself. This it is which gives some notion of God, while yet beyond all our conceptions—our very incapacity of fully grasping Him affords us the idea of what He really is. He is presented to our minds in His transcendent greatness, as at once known and unknown. . . .

Once these things were with us, too, the theme of ridicule. We are of your stock and nature: men are made, not born, Christians. The preachers of whom we have spoken are called prophets, from the office which belongs to them of predicting the future. Their words, as well as the miracles which they performed, that men might have faith in their divine authority, we have still in the literary treasures they have left, and which are open to all. Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, the most learned of his race, a man of vast acquaintance with all literature, emulating, I imagine, the book enthusiasm of Pisistratus, among other remains of the past which either their antiquity or something of peculiar interest made famous, at the suggestion of Demetrius Phalereus, who was renowned above all grammarians of his time, and to whom he had committed the management of these things, applied to the Jews for their writings—I mean the writings peculiar to them and in their tongue, which they alone possessed. For from themselves, as a people dear to God for their fathers' sake, their prophets had ever sprung, and to them they had ever spoken. Now in ancient times the people we call Jews bore the name of Hebrews, and so both their writings and their speech were Hebrew. But that the understanding of their books might not be wanting, this also the Jews supplied to Ptolemy; for they gave him seventy-two interpreters—men whom the philosopher Menedemus, the wellknown assertor of a Providence, regarded with respect as sharing in his views. The same account is given by Aristæus. So the king left these works unlocked to all, in the Greek language. To

this day, at the temple of Serapis, the libraries of Ptolemy are to be seen, with the identical Hebrew originals in them. The Jews, too, read them publicly. Under a tribute-liberty, they are in the habit of going to hear them every Sabbath. Whoever gives ear will find God in them; whoever takes pains to understand, will be compelled to believe. . . .

For we offer prayer for the safety of our princes to the eternal, the true, the living God, whose favour, beyond all others, they must themselves desire. They know from whom they have obtained their power; they know, as they are men, from whom they have received life itself; they are convinced that He is God alone, on whose power alone they are entirely dependent, to whom they are second, after whom they occupy the highest places, before and above all the gods. Why not, since they are above all living men, and the living, as living, are superior to the dead? They reflect upon the extent of their power, and so they come to understand the highest; they acknowledge that they have all their might from Him against whom their might is nought. Let the emperor make war on heaven; let him lead heaven captive in his triumph; let him put guards on heaven; let him impose taxes on heaven! He cannot. Just because he is less than heaven, he is great. For he himself is His to whom heaven and every creature appertains. He gets his sceptre where he first got his humanity; his power where he got the breath of life. Thither we lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin; with head uncovered, for we have nothing whereof to be ashamed; finally, without a monitor, because it is from the heart we supplicate. And, without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest,—whatever, as man or Cæsar, an emperor would wish. . . .

But go zealously on, good presidents, you will stand higher with the people if you sacrifice the Christians at their wish, kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust; your injustice is the proof that we are innocent. Therefore it is

of God's permitting, not of your mere will, that we thus suffer. . . .

Nor does your cruelty, however exquisite, avail you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. . . . On this account it is that we return thanks on the very spot for your sentences. As the divine and human are ever opposed to each other, when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by the Highest.

TEUTONIC INVADERS

IN the time of the early Roman Republic the northern part of Italy was known as Cis-alpine Gaul, while the name Trans-alpine Gaul was applied to an indefinite area north of the Alps; these names signified *this side* and *beyond* the Alps. Trans-Gallia was at that period occupied largely by the Celts, an ancient race of whom comparatively little is known. They seem to have been richly endowed with fine feeling, imagination, and musical sense; a recent writer suggests that, were more known of them, they might take place with the great nations of antiquity. As it is, they are known best through survivals in Wales and Ireland whither remnants of the race fled when Britain was taken by the Romans. At one time they were powerful enough to dominate Central Europe from the Atlantic to the Asiatic borders; the height of their power appears to have been reached about 400 B. C., after which they were often forced out of large portions of their territory by invading Germanic tribes.

The northern part of Europe, including southern Sweden and the region around the Baltic, was designated by the Romans as Germania. Of the people who dwelt within it, modern excavation has furnished considerable data, especially for the Bronze Age, extending to within a few centuries of the Christian era. These Germanic peoples belonged to the Aryan or Indo-European race to which the Greeks, Italians, the peoples of Western Europe and we ourselves belong. They were separated into many tribes, usually hostile to one another and frequently at war for the possession of coveted pasture land. They carried on a crude form of agriculture and herded their cattle on the grassy plains. In appearance they were a tall, fair, blue-eyed people, of powerful frame and, to the Italians of slighter build, they were fear-impelling enemies. Their

government was of the slightest, not unlike that of Homeric Greece. Their warriors followed a king who was chosen for his bravery rather than hereditary right; they supported him at all hazards and preferred to perish with him on the battle field rather than survive him. When they set out for new territory, land soon being exhausted by their primitive methods of cultivation, they took with them their families and such possessions as they could carry on carts drawn by oxen. If they encountered enemies who disputed their way, they fought bitterly and chose death rather than slavery.

Before the discoveries which have recently been made in south Sweden and around the Baltic Sea there were only two important sources of information about the early Germans: one, the *Commentariës* of Cæsar, written while he conducted his campaigns in Gaul during the years 58-51 B. C., and the *Germania* of Tacitus, a Roman official and historian, who lived from 55-117 A. D. Whether his duties took Tacitus to interior Germania is not known, but he doubtless had opportunity to study those tribes which in his age were settled along the Roman frontiers. Cæsar jotted down notes during his military expeditions for the information of friends and enemies at the capital—to justify so far as possible his actions in their eyes. Tacitus deplored many of the abuses of his own age and it is thought that he endeavored to throw them into greater contrast by paralleling the customs of the Germans. Some go so far as to call the *Germania* a satire as well as a history. Nevertheless we are compelled, in absence of other surviving material, to base our knowledge of these forest dwellers to a considerable extent upon his writing.

It will be remembered that the Gauls first appeared in Rome during the early Republic—about 390 B. C., when the Romans fled at their approach and they were allowed to pillage the town, although tradition claims that they spared Capitoline Hill. It is probable that these were Celts who pressed south from Cisalpine Gaul. Not until the late Republic were the Romans forced to take further notice of them.

Due to the increase of population and consequent overcrowding, the exhaustion of the land and the pressure of

tribes at the rear, every few generations found these primitive people on the march. Such an age of turmoil and confusion set in about 200 B. C. The Germans, who ordinarily dwelt beyond the boundaries established by the Rhine and Danube, sought to appropriate the fertile territories south and west of these rivers. The migration of one tribe was often the signal for a general shifting around, since whatever lands were vacated by a nation appealed to some other as preferable to its own. By 108 B. C. the Cimbri, having pushed through Gaul, threatened Italy but did not actually get started in this direction until a few years later. Six Roman armies were defeated before Marius was sent against them. He was unconstitutionally re-elected consul by the Romans, who, dismayed at the indications of appalling corruption and weakness in their legions, preferred illegalities to military defeats. Marius practically destroyed the Cimbri in 102 B. C.

Ambitious to outdo Pompey, Cæsar secured the command of Gaul for the purpose of winning new provinces. By this time the Celts had been pushed into what is now France and part of Germany. A German chieftain, Ariovistus, had crossed the Rhine and was invading the territory of the Gauls, as the inhabitants of Central Europe were indiscriminately called. This was but the beginning of one of these general migrations which were becoming more and more frequent. Cæsar was successful in forcing him back across the Rhine and made two incursions into the territory of the Germans to strike terror of Roman arms into the hearts of other prospective assailants. He also invaded Britain. His brilliant victories were sufficient to insure peace on the northern frontiers for half a century, while Gaul was organized as a province and the work of Romanizing begun. Cæsar received Germans into his army—a custom which other Roman commanders were afterwards to extensively follow.

Augustus found it necessary to repel attacks along the northern frontier and to this end dispatched his two adopted sons, Tiberius and Drusus (sons of Livia by an earlier marriage) with Roman legions. While Tiberius was occupied along the Danube, Drusus determined to press east

to the Elbe and thus shorten the long boundary that Rome guarded. Regrettably he was killed in 9 A. D. and this project was never accomplished. Tiberius organized four Roman provinces south of the Danube as buffers against the barbarians. Walls were built and forts stationed at intervals. Augustus appointed Varus as governor of Pannonia, one of the four new provinces; unfortunately, he lacked the tact and discretion sufficient to cope with the situation. Incurring the hatred of the new German allies, he and three Roman legions were destroyed in ambush. This ended any attempt on the part of Augustus to extend the northern frontier.

Succeeding emperors found it necessary to punish aggressions of tribes along the borders and occasionally to instill fear into the hearts of these tribes who became more and more eager for a share in the fertile lands to the south. Vespasian, Domitian and Hadrian all built portions of walls and planted forts until a continuous line of defense extended from the mouth of the Rhine on the west to the mouth of the Danube on the east. Trajan carried Roman arms north of the traditional boundaries and added Dacia to the Empire. A record of this campaign, as we have seen,^z was chiselled in marble on his commemorative column in the new Forum which he constructed in the capital. He colonized his veterans in Dacia and the Latinizing of this territory was begun. The word *Roumania* today survives as a corrupt form of *Rome*.

Marcus Aurelius, whose temperament and philosophy inclined him naturally to peace, was compelled to forsake the comforts of Rome for the military camp; although all advantage that he won was lost under his incompetent son, Commodus. Aurelius was later obliged to relinquish claim to Dacia in favor of the Goths, while to protect Rome against possible attack, he built a new wall around the city. This in itself was tacit acknowledgment of the growing weakness in Roman legions.

Finally in 376 the Huns poured into Europe between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea, spreading terror in their wake. Fierce Asiatic Mongols, they filled even the warlike Germans with dismay. The Ostrogoths yielded to

them; the Visigoths pushed on towards Roman dominions, beseeching consent of the Emperor Valens in Constantinople to cross the Danube and take up lands south of the river. He hesitated some time but at last gave the permission sought, perhaps convinced that they would otherwise come without it. The agreement was that their weapons were to be surrendered to Roman officials. It was indicative of the corruption of the age that officers sent to receive their arms occupied themselves instead with abducting their wives and daughters and in selling them food at prohibitive prices, neglecting meanwhile to collect their weapons. The result was that these new comers, who approximated 200,000, were presently provoked to war and in a battle waged with them by Valens at Hadrianople in 378, he and two-thirds of the Roman army perished. This disastrous occurrence proved to the Germans that they could defeat the legions and that the Roman emperor, of whom they had hitherto stood in dread, could be slain in open battle. Some think this date, instead of 476, should be accepted as marking the downfall of Rome, which only proves the futility of attempting to indicate human progress by arbitrary dates, these at best serving as milestones.

To show how thoroughly the Germanic element pervaded the army, a few years later Stilicho, a Vandal, became commander of the imperial legions.

The Visigoths chose Alaric as their leader. He invaded Greece and plundered Athens, which city he spared out of consideration for the past, although he destroyed Corinth. He was propitiated by the Eastern emperor by being made governor of the province Illyricum. Stilicho, the only general able to repulse him, was later assassinated by the emperor's orders and now Alaric might plunder at will. Accordingly, he marched upon Rome in 410 and for ten days the city was sacked by his soldiers. Not since the Second Punic war had foes stood at the gates of Rome and not since the early invasion of the Gauls had they succeeded in capturing the capital. The effect on men's minds was appalling. They had supposed that Rome would stand forever more powerful than her enemies. St. Augustine wrote his *City of God* to impress the Christians with an Eternal

City beyond the reach of mortal foes. He took care to point out that the early gods had not been able to protect Rome from disasters. Many brave spirits were sorely depressed and disheartened in times so tumultuous.

After the death of Alaric, the Visigoths left Italy for Gaul, later wandering into Spain where the Vandals had preceded them. These they succeeded in displacing; they settled in Spain while the Vandals crossed over into Africa. From this time forward the Visigoths—or West Goths—ceased to play a conspicuous part in Europe.

The Vandals were composite in character. Genseric was their leader. He and his followers became Arian Christians and displayed great ferocity against the orthodox followers. For a century the Vandals maintained themselves in the province of Africa, which was afterwards reclaimed for the Empire under Justinian. Our words *vandal* and *vandalism* originate from their name, which became synonymous with ravage and destruction. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether they were more destructive than others of these Teutonic tribes. Each pillaged and plundered. The Germans were naturally disinclined toward cities. They said that in them men were buried alive. The appurtenances of civilization, so cherished by people accustomed to them, meant nothing to these forest dwellers. A characteristic story is told of a German chief who gazed at a mosaic floor wherein doves were depicted as splashing and flying around a pool. In order to learn whether or not the scene was real, he threw his heavy battle-ax at it and ruined it.

The Huns, whose advance had been the occasion of the Visigoths' entering Roman territory, crossed into Gaul in 451. Fortunately the Germans saw the need of joining with the Romans against these common enemies. In the battle of Chalôns they were defeated. They pressed into Italy and came to the very gates of Rome, while the people trembled at the thought of another pillage. Pope Leo I went forth courageously to meet them, to persuade them to spare the ancient city. Recent historians offer the opinion that disease was already decimating their ranks. Their leader, Attila, died in 453 and after his death his followers melted away.

For years the emperors who ruled in Rome had been weaklings. Their armies were predominantly German. The army now set up whom it would to rule as emperor. Finally in 476 Odoacer, a German commander, made himself supreme. Acknowledging the over-lordship of the emperor at Constantinople, he ruled in Italy. Because this year witnessed the end of Roman emperors in the West and the establishment of Germans, it is commonly accepted as marking the termination of the Roman Empire. Certainly its political strength was gone, although its civilization persisted indefinitely.

Theodoric, son of an Ostrogothic king, had lived at Constantinople for ten years as a hostage, to insure the good conduct of his people. In 488 he asked permission of the Eastern emperor to reconquer Italy for the Empire. This being readily given, he marched with his 200,000 followers into the peninsula, defeated Odoacer and established an Ostrogothic kingdom which lasted from 493 till 526, when he died. During his administration he repaired walls, aqueducts, buildings and restored order in the land. Agriculture was once more resumed. Ostrogoths composed the army and the Romans were free to pursue the arts of peace and to carry on trade. By negotiating several marriages he was able to solidify his kingdom. He married the sister of Clovis, king of the Franks. One princess of his house was married to the king of the Visigoths; another, to the king of the Burgundians. Had he left a son strong enough to carry on the work he so ably began, the turmoil of the early mediæval centuries might have been cut short. One of the greatest obstacles to permanency was that the Germans as a rule became Arians. This engendered bitterness between them and the orthodox Christians, the hatred being often fierce indeed. The orthodox Christians regarded pagans more favorably than Arians; the first were felt to be still outside the fold but the others were held as heretics because they had left it.

The historian is ever concerned with what occurred, not with what might have happened provided events had befallen differently. The short-lived kingdom established by Theodoric disappeared and it seemed as though all were

lost; yet the conception of a Germanic kingdom remained, to take form again three hundred years later.

In 527 Justinian became emperor in Constantinople. Under his firm guidance both Africa and Italy were once more brought under imperial control. Belisarius dealt the Ostrogoths such a decisive blow that they left the peninsula in a body, as they had entered it. After the death of Justinian a new tribe, the Longabards or Longbeards, invaded the Italian peninsula. Some of the Romans fled before their ferocity and took refuge on the islets that later became Venice. These new invaders pillaged and destroyed, then wandered on to lay waste new territory. Finally they settled in the district now known as Lombardy, where they maintained a kingdom until conquered by Charlemagne, king of the Franks. The Franks settled in what is now France and, although less prominent in the early centuries, were destined later to play an important rôle in European affairs. Because they accepted orthodox Christianity, they incurred less hostility than the Goths.

The early religion of the Germanic peoples was a worship of natural forces. After the manner of the Greeks, they conceived of their deities as beings similar to themselves, only perfected. Because their belief was vague they were easily won over to a new faith. Often whole armies would be baptized at once, immediately espousing the religion of their king. As would be expected under such conditions, for generations their religion was a blending of ancient conceptions and such new ideas as they acquired concerning the new faith. We read amusing stories of chiefs who raised one Christian altar in a church and another in the forest sacred to the old gods; thus they were bound to propitiate the great powers of the universe one way or the other.

With the naïveté of children, they combined credulity with dauntless courage. No better treatment of them in this respect has been given than the one by Kingsley entitled "The Forest Children," originally a lecture given at Cambridge in a series of historical talks. The story of the Troll garden is vivid and suggestive.

It is difficult for us, in reviewing the invasions of the

barbarians, to realize the condition of the times while these were taking place. Into beautiful Italy, possessed of the highest civilization of the times, heir of all past culture, was percipitated horde after horde of forest dwellers who could only destroy what they did not understand. They laid waste entire tracts of Southern and Central Europe. Cities, towns, villages were wiped out of existence; their inhabitants were often exterminated. Smiling fields that had long been cultivated reverted to forests. All evidences of former occupation were oftentimes obliterated. It was as though, after a long summer and lingering autumn, the isolation and chilling clutch of winter had descended upon earth. It is true that in some places life continued largely undisturbed but it could not go on as before. Under the precarious conditions such as had befallen the world only the matter of subsistence could be considered by humanity. In view of the havoc and despoilation, it is small wonder that these centuries were long known as *Dark Ages*.

* See First Year: Imperial Rome.

THE FOREST CHILDREN*

I wish in this first lecture to give you some general conception of the causes which urged our Teutonic race to attack and destroy Rome. . . . And I shall begin, if you will allow me, by a parable, a myth, a saga, such as the men of whom I am going to tell you loved; and if it seems to any of you childish, bear in mind that what is childish need not therefore be shallow. I know that it is not history. These lectures will not be, in the popular sense, history at all. But I beg you to bear in mind that I am not here to teach you history. No man can do that. I am here to teach you how to teach yourselves history. I will give you the scaffolding as well as I can; you must build the house.

Fancy to yourself a great Troll-garden, such as our forefathers dreamed of often fifteen hundred years ago; a fairy palace, with a fairy garden; and all around the primæval wood. Inside the Trolls dwell, cunning and wicked, watching their fairy treasures, working at their magic forges, making and making always things rare and strange; and outside, the forest is full of children; such children as the world had never seen before, but children still: children in frankness, and purity, and affectionateness, and tenderness of conscience, and devout awe of the unseen; and children too in fancy, and silliness, and ignorance, and caprice, and jealousy, and quarrelsomeness, and love of excitement and adventure, and the mere sport of overflowing animal health. They play unharmed among the forest beasts, and conquer them in their play; but the forest is too dull and too poor for them; and they wander to the walls of the Troll-garden, and wonder what is inside. One can conceive easily for oneself what from that moment would begin to happen. Some of the more adventurous clamber in. Some, too, the Trolls steal and carry off into their palace. Most never

return: but here and there one escapes out again, and tells how the Trolls killed all his comrades: but tells, too, of the wonders he has seen inside, of shoes of swiftness, and swords of sharpness, and caps of darkness; of charmed harps, charmed jewels, and above all of the charmed wine: and after all, the Trolls were very kind to him—see what fine clothes they have given him—and he struts about awhile among his companions; and then returns, and not alone. The Trolls have bewitched him, as they will bewitch more. So the fame of the Troll-garden spreads; and more and more steal in, boys and maidens, and tempt their comrades over the wall, and tell of the jewels, and the dresses, and the wine, the joyous maddening wine, which equals men with gods; and forget to tell how the Trolls have bought them, soul as well as body, and taught them to be vain, and lustful, and slavish; and tempted them, too often, to sins which have no name.

But their better nature flashes out at times. They will not be the slaves and brutes in human form, which the evil Trolls would have them; and they rebel, and escape, and tell of the horrors of that fair foul place. And then arises a noble indignation, and war between the Trolls and the forest-children. But still the Trolls can tempt and bribe the greedier or the more vain; and still the wonders inside haunt their minds; till it becomes a fixed idea among them all, to conquer the garden for themselves and bedizen themselves in the fine clothes, and drink their fill of the wine. Again and again they break in: but the Trolls drive them out, rebuild their walls, keep off those outside by those whom they hold enslaved within; till the boys grow to be youths, and the youths men: and still the Troll-garden is not conquered, and still it shall be. And the Trolls have grown old and weak, and their walls are crumbling away. Perhaps they may succeed this time—perhaps next.

And at last they do succeed—the fairy walls are breached, the fairy palace stormed—and the Trolls are crouching at their feet, and now all will be theirs, gold, jewels, dresses, arms, all that the Troll possesses—except his cunning.

For as each struggles into the charmed ground, the spell

of the place falls on him. He drinks the wine, and it maddens him. He fills his arms with precious trumpery, and another snatches it from his grasp. Each envies the youth before him, each cries—Why had I not the luck to enter first? And the Trolls set them against each other, and split them into parties, each mad with excitement, and jealousy, and wine, till, they scarce know how, each falls upon his fellow, and all upon those who are crowding in from the forest, and they fight and fight, up and down the palace halls, till their triumph has become a very feast of the Lapithæ, and the Trolls look on, and laugh a wicked laugh, as they tar them on to the unnatural fight, till the gardens are all trampled, the finery torn, the halls dismantled, and each pavement slippery with brothers' blood. And then, when the wine is gone out of them, the survivors come to their senses, and stare shamefully and sadly round. What an ugly, desolate, tottering ruin the fairy palace has become! Have they spoilt it themselves? or have the Trolls bewitched it? And all the fairy treasure—what has become of it? no man knows. Have they thrown it away in their quarrel? have the cunningest hidden it? have the Trolls flown away with it, to the fairy land beyond the Eastern mountains? who can tell? Nothing is left but recrimination and remorse. And they wander back again into the forest, away from the doleful ruin, carrion-strewn, to sulk each apart over some petty spoil which he has saved from the general wreck, hating and dreading each the sound of his neighbour's footstep.

What will become of the forest children, unless some kind saint or hermit comes among them, to bind them in the holy bonds of brotherhood and law?

This is my saga; and it is a true one withal. For it is neither more nor less than the story of the Teutonic tribes, and how they overthrew the Empire of Rome.

* Charles Kingsley.

BEGINNINGS OF MONASTICISM

EXAMPLES in antiquity were not wanting of men who withdrew from the world for purposes of contemplation. In Egypt and various parts of Western Asia this practice was followed, while in India, centuries before our era, brotherhoods existed and recluses sought sanctification in remote caves. It is believed that Elijah was a hermit and others were known to the early Hebrews. We have already found that Pythagoras founded a religious order among the Hellenes.²

During the first and second centuries of Christian teaching, it was felt to be enough for followers to abstain from attendance at the ancient religious festivals and to remain aloof from such ceremonies as were at variance with their own beliefs. Martyrdom afforded frequent opportunity for courage to manifest and for Christian enthusiasts to testify their willingness to suffer death for the religion they held dear. After this became the official faith, the austerity of hermit life began to make a strong appeal. It was thought that mere participation in church services and abstinence from certain foods at prescribed times were not enough for soldiers of the cross. Moreover, with the rapid changes in population, the moral tone of the church had suffered. Teutons were sometimes received into the ranks by the hundreds, even thousands, when their chieftains were won over to the new faith. As would be expected under such conditions, many of the former conceptions, ceremonies and rites were retained, blended with such new ones as the ignorant could comprehend. In the Eastern empire, where classical influence was strongest, there was a tendency to replace faith by forms and ceremonials. For these reasons, by the fifth century, the simplicity and purity of early years had in a large measure disappeared.

Munro, basing his discussion of the subject on the letters of Jerome, from whom he quotes at length, says: "Baptism had come to be considered popularly as a mystic rite by which all sin was washed away. . . . Some Christians even believed that all who had been baptized would be saved, no matter how sinful their lives had been. As the temples were converted into churches, pagan customs were copied or continued, so that many festivals with their accompanying ceremonies became identified with the Christian worship. 'Christian churches of the fifth century even copied the pagan custom of having baths attached for the convenience of the worshippers. People hung up their crutches and ex-votos to the saints as they had done to Juno and Aesculapius. They had the music, the incense, and the flowers, and candles, vestments and holy-water, just as in the good old times.' Sacred banquets, similar to the old pagan feasts, were held in the churches in the fourth century; on such occasions feasting, drinking, and dancing through the whole day polluted the building."¹

Under such circumstances it is not strange that the devout often sought solitary places in which to meditate and escape temptation. The early persecutions had led many to flee to inaccessible places and those whose relatives were destroyed sometimes remained in caves or mountain recesses, even after safety again prevailed. There were several reasons to induce those of certain temperament to eschew the world and seek retreat. Order and good government had disappeared; with the surging to and fro of half-civilized tribes, life was everywhere unsafe. Some earnestly felt that they had no right to bring children into so chaotic a world to contend with such deplorable conditions. It was wellnigh impossible to pursue regular occupations and the simple matter of getting the bare necessities of life was often hard to cope with. Those who were unfit for, or disinclined to war, sought protection and safety in out of the way places, finding thus the quiet and security they craved. The serious charge of saving their souls oppressed the fearful; bodily suffering was regarded as pleasing in the sight of God. Hence they found satisfaction in mortifying the flesh. It was in the nature of the case that some,

trying to escape the just deserts of their misdeeds, affected piety and masked as saints.

In the latter part of the third century St. Anthony retreated to a cave in central Egypt where he dwelt for many years. As was often the case with hermits, many besought him to accept them as followers. Such recluses were regarded as holy and it was believed that disease might be healed by them and that proximity to them was beneficial. Finally Anthony established a brotherhood of those who attached themselves to him. Among its members the desire to escape temptation and to overcome the passions was primary. Although it is often so stated, it is scarcely true to say that he founded a monastery. Although the followers dwelt near one another, it was more an aggregation of hermits than an order such as later came into being.

Pachomius founded no less than nine monasteries for men and one for women in southern Egypt during the fourth century. Manual work was part of the daily program. In these associations each lived apart from the others, nor did they even partake of their meals together. Nevertheless, they attended the same religious services and definite rules were observed.

Athanasius carried asceticism to Rome, taking two monks with him from one of the Egyptian brotherhoods. The biblical text: "If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give it to the poor, . . . and come and follow me" was interpreted to place emphasis on the ascetic life. Accordingly, many from the upper classes in Rome now became enthusiastic over this way of demonstrating their devotion to Christianity; the more so since a *Life of St. Anthony* had now been written and churchmen were high in praise of his holiness.

The more popular this type of living became, the more did dangers threaten it because of the frailty of its adherents. In the first place there was a tendency to imitate fanatical excesses practised by Orientals. Both in Egypt and Syria these quickly appeared and seemed more reprehensible still when brought into the West, where ideals unlike those of the Orient rendered them wholly out of place. Such religious intoxication, if one may use such an expres-

sion, as is presented today by the Hindu fakir or by the dervishes, was displayed by the "Pillar Saints" of Asia. Most conspicuous of these was Simeon Stylites who died in 459, having spent thirty years on the top of pillars three feet in diameter and varying from ten to sixty feet in height; lower columns were used at first and then replaced by higher ones as he advanced in his self-denials and conquered the flesh. Such perversion of an otherwise useful life was prevented by the controlling sentiment in the West.

Asceticism was introduced among Greek Christians by St. Basil, who visited several settlements of celibates before founding his monastery in Pontus. His plan marked a departure from those previously pursued in that his monks constituted a family, dwelling under a common roof and sharing meals, work, services and other activities together. He laid emphasis on daily toil, realizing that wholesome conditions could only be maintained if the days were regulated with alternating rest and labor. Many Basilian monasteries were later founded in Europe, there being no connection between them except that they adopted the Basilian Rule. Eusebius died in 371. He introduced another change into monasticism by requiring his clergy to adopt monastic rule. This led, some centuries later, to the custom of monks uniformly becoming priests.

It is to St. Benedict that Western monasticism owes a great debt. He came from Italy, the home of well organized government. Born in 480 of noble stock, he was sent to Rome to be educated but soon found the worldly life of his companions offensive and retreated while still a youth to an isolated mountain cave where he remained some time. Later he founded a monastery at Monte Cassino, ninety miles from Rome. This spot had been sacred to Apollo whose worship was still perpetuated there. Abolishing it, Benedict taught the Gospel of Christ and established an Order whose Rule has been adhered to by most religious Orders in the West ever since. He borrowed somewhat from the Basilian Rule, but many features were entirely his own. Believing "idleness to be the great enemy of the soul," he prescribed seven hours of manual labor for all monks. His Rule was one of moderation. While austere,

it was scarcely more so than was contemporary military life.

The weaknesses and indulgences of certain monasteries were now threatening all religious orders. Benedict wisely instituted a probational year before a brother could be received into his Order, by which time his adaptability was either demonstrated or his unfitness proved. This eliminated one of the most serious problems: how to deal with those temperamentally unsuited to the routine of institutional existence. Again, he provided that once received into a monastery, a member must remain there permanently. Heretofore as quickly as the requirements of one religious house displeased unruly members, they had left for others and a floating population of this kind was bringing discredit to the whole system.

Chastity, poverty and obedience were the foundation stones of the new monastery. The head of this Order was an abbot, elected by the monks but thenceforward supreme; yet he must consult with the members concerning grave matters and in lesser ones with the more experienced among them—an administration that beyond question reflected the earlier government of Rome.

Two hours were reserved each day for study, and so it came about that the Benedictine monasteries grew into centers of learning. Libraries were collected and books copied. Those who were physically unable to work in the fields or who displayed special aptitude for the task were set to copying manuscripts, which were frequently exchanged for other writings desired. This fostering of learning was to have far-reaching importance for the future.

Hospitality was engendered. It was said that in receiving guests, they were entertaining Christ and the more forsaken and poor their visitors, the more incumbent was it upon the hosts to dispense comfort and good cheer. This reception of strangers at a time when public inns were few and where long journeys were beset with dangers, constituted one of the fine services which these brotherhoods rendered. Even today, near the dangerous passes in the Alps and elsewhere in mountainous Europe, almost invari-

ably a religious order survives, providing safety and rest for the traveler who may be overcome by fatigue or storm.

The sixth century saw the gravest dangers of monasticism averted by reducing the cloistered life to regularity and rule. Having passed its experimental period, it was to accomplish a great work during the later mediæval ages. Not that it was to prove immune to all danger. It was not possible to give to a human institution sufficient protection to insure its complete triumph over human nature. Yet those abuses which were for awhile flagrant enough to arouse the resentment of all right-minded men, such as the advantage taken by those willing to accept a living without toil; the imposters who established so-called monasteries for the mere purpose of receiving alms; the presence of those who desired to demoralize the religious community and various other incongruous features were abolished by regulations establishing orderly conduct and cheerful obedience.

While one monastery was in no way dependent upon others, missionaries went out from them to found new institutions subject to the Benedictine Rule. Accepting these fundamental provisions, each was free to carry on its special work independently and members were enjoined to make use of such other prescribed regulations as there were at hand—the Basilian Rule particularly—and to formulate new ones to meet new conditions.

It has been said that this Rule of St. Benedict had as great significance for the future as any constitution ever written. Since monasticism was to fill such an influential part in the centuries which followed, it was indeed fortunate that it was firmly established on principles that were conducive to permanence and strength.

¹ Munro: *The Middle Ages*, p. 25.

² See First Year: Early Greece.

FROM THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Prologue. . . . We are about to found a school for the Lord's service; in the organization of which we trust that we shall ordain nothing severe and nothing burdensome. But even if, the demands of justice dictating it, something a little irksome shall be the result, for the purpose of amending vices or preserving charity;—thou shalt not therefore, struck by fear, flee the way of salvation, which can not be entered upon except through a narrow entrance. But as one's way of life and one's faith progresses, the heart becomes broadened, and, with the unutterable sweetness of love, the way of the mandates of the Lord is traversed. Thus, never departing from His guidance, continuing in the monastery in His teaching until death, through patience we are made partakers in Christ's passion, in order that we may merit to be companions in His kingdom.

Concerning the kinds of monks and their manner of living. It is manifest that there are four kinds of monks. The cenobites are the first kind; that is, those living in a monastery, serving under a rule or an abbot. Then the second kind is that of the anchorites; that is, the hermits,—those who, not by the new fervour of a conversion but by the long probation of life in a monastery, have learned to fight against the devil, having already been taught by the solace of many. They, having been well prepared in the army of brothers for the solitary fight of the hermit, being secure now without the consolation of another, are able, God helping them, to fight with their own hand or arm against the vices of the flesh or of their thoughts.

But a third very bad kind of monks are the sarabaites, approved by no rule, experience being their teacher, as with the gold which is tried in the furnace. But, softened after the manner of lead, keeping faith with the world by their works, they are known through their tonsure to lie to God. These being shut up by twos or threes, or, indeed, alone, without a shepherd, not in the Lord's but in their own sheep-folds,—their law is the satisfaction of their desires. For whatever they think good or choice, this they call holy;

and what they do not wish, this they consider unlawful. But the fourth kind of monks is the kind which is called gyrary. During their whole life they are guests, for three or four days at a time, in the cells of the different monasteries, throughout the various provinces; always wandering and never stationary, given over to the service of their own pleasures and the joys of the palate, and in every way worse than the sarabaites. Concerning the most wretched way of living of all of such monks it is better to be silent than to speak. These things therefore being omitted, let us proceed, with the aid of God, to treat of the best kind, the cenobites.

What the Abbot should be like. An abbot who is worthy to preside over a monastery ought always to remember what he is called, and carry out with his deeds the name of a Superior. For he is believed to be Christ's representative, since he is called by His name, the apostle saying: "Ye have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we call Abba, Father." And so the abbot should not—grant that he may not—teach, or decree, or order, anything apart from the precept of the Lord; but his order or teaching should be sprinkled with the ferment of divine justice in the minds of his disciples. Let the abbot always be mindful that, at the tremendous judgment of God, both things will be weighed in the balance: his teaching and the obedience of his disciples. And let the abbot know that whatever the father of the family finds of less utility among the sheep is laid to the fault of the shepherd. . . .

Concerning obedience. The first grade of humility is obedience without delay. This becomes those who, on account of the holy service which they have professed, or on account of the fear of hell or the glory of eternal life consider nothing dearer to them than Christ: so that, so soon as anything is commanded by their superior, they may not know how to suffer delay in doing it, even as if it were a divine command. Concerning whom the Lord said: "As soon as he heard of me he obeyed me." And again he said to the learned men: "He who heareth you heareth me." Therefore let all such, straightway leaving their own affairs and giving up their own will, with unoccupied hands

and leaving incomplete what they were doing—the foot of obedience being foremost,—follow with their deeds the voice of him who orders. . . .

Concerning silence. Let us do as the prophet says: “I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue, I have kept my mouth with a bridle: I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.” Here the prophet shows that if one ought at times, for the sake of silence, to refrain from good sayings; how much more, as a punishment for sin, ought one to cease from evil words. . . . And therefore, if anything is to be asked of the prior, let it be asked with all humility and subjection of reverence; lest one seem to speak more than is fitting. Scurrilities, however, or idle words and those exciting laughter, we condemn in all places with a lasting prohibition: nor do we permit a disciple to open his mouth for such sayings.

Concerning humility. . . . The sixth grade of humility is, that a monk be contented with all lowliness or extremity, and consider himself, with regard to everything which is enjoined on him, as a poor and unworthy workman; saying to himself with the prophet: “I was reduced to nothing and was ignorant; I was made as the cattle before thee, and I am always with thee.” The seventh grade of humility is, not only that he, with his tongue, pronounce himself viler and more worthless than all; but that he also believe it in the innermost workings of his heart; humbling himself and saying with the prophet, etc. . . . The eighth degree of humility is that a monk do nothing except what the common rule of the monastery, or the example of his elders, urges him to do. The ninth degree of humility is that a monk restrain his tongue from speaking; and, keeping silence, do not speak until he is spoken to. The tenth grade of humility is that he be not ready, and easily inclined, to laugh. . . . The eleventh grade of humility is that a monk, when he speaks, speak slowly and without laughter, humbly with gravity, using few and reasonable words; and that he be not loud of voice. . . . The twelfth grade of humility is that a monk, shall not only with his heart but also with his body, always show humility to all who see him: that is, when at

work, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on the road, in the fields. And everywhere, sitting or walking or standing, let him always be with head inclined, his looks fixed upon the ground; remembering every hour that he is guilty of his sins. Let him think that he is already being presented before the tremendous judgment of God, saying always to himself in his heart what that publican of the gospel, fixing his eyes on the earth, said: "Lord I am not worthy, I a sinner, so much as to lift up mine eyes unto Heaven."

Concerning the divine offices at night. In the winter time, that is from the Calends of November until Easter, according to what is reasonable, they must rise at the eighth hour of the night, so that they rest a little more than half the night, and rise when they have already digested. But let the time that remains after vigils be kept for meditation by those brothers who are in any way behind hand with the psalter or lessons. From Easter, moreover, until the aforesaid Calends of November, let the hour of keeping vigils be so arranged that, a short interval being observed in which the brethren may go out for the necessities of nature, the matins, which are always to take place with the dawning light, may straightway follow. . . .

How the monks shall sleep. They shall sleep separately in separate beds. They shall receive positions for their beds, after the manner of their characters, according to the dispensation of their abbot. If it can be done, they shall all sleep in one place. If, however, their number do not permit it, they shall rest by tens or twenties, with elders who will concern themselves about them. A candle shall always be burning in that same cell until early in the morning. They shall sleep clothed, and girt with belts or with ropes; and they shall not have their knives at their sides while they sleep, lest perchance in a dream they should wound the sleepers. And let the monks be always on the alert; and, when the signal is given, rising without delay, let them hasten to mutually prepare themselves for the service of God—with all gravity and modesty, however. The younger brothers shall not have beds by themselves, but interspersed among those of the elder ones. And when

they rise for the service of God, they shall exhort each other mutually with moderation, on account of the excuses that those who are sleepy are inclined to make. . . .

Whether the monks should have anything of their own. More than anything else is this special vice to be cut off root and branch from the monastery, that one should presume to give or receive anything without the order of the abbot, or should have anything of his own. He should have absolutely not anything: neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen—nothing at all. For indeed it is not allowed to the monks to have their own bodies or wills in their own power. But all things necessary they must expect from the Father of the monastery; nor is it allowable to have anything which the abbot did not give or permit. All things shall be common to all, as it is written: “Let not any man presume or call anything his own.” But if one shall have been discovered delighting in this most evil vice: being warned once and again, if he do not amend, let him be subjected to punishment. . . .

Concerning infirm brothers. Before all, and above all, attention shall be paid to the care of the sick; so that they shall be served as if it were actually Christ. For He himself said: “I was sick and ye visited me.” And: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto me.” But let the sick also consider that they are being served to the honour of God; and let them not offend by their abundance the brothers who serve them: which (offences) nevertheless are patiently to be borne, for, from such, a greater reward is acquired. Wherefore let the abbot take the greatest care lest they suffer neglect. And for these infirm brothers a cell by itself shall be set apart, and a servitor, God-fearing, and diligent and careful. The use of baths shall be offered to the sick as often as it is necessary: to the healthy, and especially to youths, it shall not be so readily conceded. But also the eating of flesh shall be allowed to the sick, and altogether to the feeble, for their rehabilitation. But when they have grown better, they shall all, in the usual manner, abstain from flesh. The abbot, moreover, shall take the greatest care lest the sick are neglected by the cellarer or by the servitors: for what-

ever fault is committed by the disciples rebounds upon him. . . .

Concerning the daily manual labour. Idleness is the enemy of the soul. And therefore, at fixed times, the brothers ought to be occupied in manual labour; and again, at fixed times, in sacred reading. Therefore we believe that, according to this disposition, both seasons ought to be arranged; so that, from Easter until the Calends of October, going out early, from the first until the fourth hour they shall do what labour may be necessary. Moreover, from the fourth hour until about the sixth, they shall be free for reading. After the meal of the sixth hour, moreover, rising from table, they shall rest in their beds with all silence; or, perchance, he that wishes to read may so read to himself that he do not disturb another. And the nona (the second meal) shall be gone through with more moderately about the middle of the eighth hour; and again they shall work at what is to be done until Vespers. But, if the exigency or poverty of the place demands that they be occupied by themselves in picking fruits, they shall not be dismayed: for then they are truly monks if they live by the labours of their hands; as did our fathers and the apostles. Let all things be done in moderation, however, on account of the faint-hearted. . . .

Concerning the reception of guests. All guests who come shall be received as though they were Christ: for He Himself said: "I was a stranger and ye took me in." And to all, fitting honour shall be shown; but, most of all, to servants of the faith and to pilgrims. When, therefore, a guest is announced, the prior or the brothers shall run to meet him, with every office of love. . . .

Concerning pilgrim monks, how they shall be received. If any pilgrim monk come from distant parts,—if he wish as a guest to dwell in the monastery, and will be content with the customs which he finds in the place, and do not perchance by his lavishness disturb the monastery, but is simply content with what he finds: he shall be received for as long a time as he desires. If, indeed, he find fault with anything or expose it, reasonably, and with the humility of charity: the abbot shall discuss it prudently, lest perchance

God had sent him for this very thing. But if, afterwards, he wish to establish himself lastingly, such a wish shall not be refused: and all the more, since, in the time of his sojourn as guest, his manner of life could have become known. But, if he have been found lavish or vicious in the time of his sojourn as guest,—not only ought he not to be joined to the body of the monastery, but also it shall be said to him, honestly, that he must depart; lest by sympathy with him, others also become contaminated. But, if he be not such a one as to merit being cast out: not only if he ask it, shall he be received and associated with the congregation, but he shall also be urged to remain; that by his example others may be instructed. For in every place one God is served, and one King is warred for. And if the abbot perceive him to be such a one, he may be allowed to place him in a somewhat higher position. For the abbot can place not only a monk, but also one from the above grades of priests or clergy, in a greater place than that in which he enters; if he perceive their life to be such a one as to demand it. Moreover the abbot must take care lest, at any time, he receive a monk to dwell (with him) from another monastery, without the consent of his abbot or letters of commendation. For it is written: “Do not unto another what thou wilt not that one do unto thee.” . . .

Concerning the doorkeepers of the monastery. At the door of the monastery shall be placed a wise old man who shall know how to receive a reply and to return one; whose ripeness of age will not permit him to trifle. Which doorkeeper ought to have a cell next to the door; so that those arriving may always find one present from whom they may receive a reply. And straightway, when anyone has knocked, or a poor man has called out, he shall answer, “Thanks be to God!” or shall give the blessing; and with all the gentleness of the fear of God he shall hastily give a reply with the fervour of charity. And if this doorkeeper need assistance he may receive a younger brother.

A monastery, moreover, if it can be done, ought so to be arranged that everything necessary,—that is, water, a mill, a garden, a bakery,—may be made use of, and different arts be carried on, within the monastery; so that there shall

be no need for the monks to wander about outside. For this is not at all good for their souls. We wish, moreover, that this Rule be read very often in the congregation; lest any of the brothers excuse himself on account of ignorance. . . .

Concerning the fact that not every just observance is decreed in this Rule. We have written out this Rule, indeed, that we may show those observing it in the monasteries how to have some honesty of character, or beginning of conversion. But for those who hasten to the perfection of living, there are the teachings of the holy Fathers: the observance of which leads a man to the heights of perfection. For what page, or what discourse, of Divine authority of the Old or the New Testament is not a most perfect rule for human life. Or what book of the holy Catholic Fathers does not trumpet forth how by the right path we shall come to our Creator? Also the reading aloud of the Fathers, and their decrees, and their lives; also the Rule of our holy Father Basil—what else are they except instruments of virtue for well-living and obedient monks? We, moreover, blush with confusion for the idle, and the evilly living and the negligent. Thou, therefore, whoever doth hasten to the celestial fatherland, perform with Christ's aid this Rule written out as the least of beginnings: and then at length, under God's protection, thou wilt come to the greater things that we have mentioned; to the summits of learning and virtue.

THE FRANKS

THE history of the Franks has special interest for us since they, of all the Germanic tribes that invaded Europe after the decline of Rome, were destined to play the most important part. Dwelling between the Rhine and the North Sea, they formed a confederacy in the third century. Later, when the Roman legions were withdrawn from the borders to fight the Visigoths in the south, they took advantage of the defenseless frontiers to pour into Gaul.

Clovis, at first a tribal chieftain, succeeded in making himself king of the whole Frankish nation in 481. He founded what is known as the Merovingian line, the name being derived from Merovæus, the name of his grandfather.

The Franks followed a different plan of conquest from other Teutonic tribes whose migrations we have noted. These generally became lost in the great Roman Empire, enervated with the life of comparative ease that soon overtook them. The Franks, on the contrary, kept in touch with their forest kinsmen, retaining longer their ferocious and warlike nature.

Clovis was cruel, revengeful and treacherous. By murder, deceit and war he extended his territory. Married to the daughter of a Burgundian king who had espoused orthodox Christianity, Clovis clung to his Teutonic gods until, in the midst of battle, fate seemed to be going against him. Thereupon the story goes that he vowed he would accept Catholicism were he victorious; nor did he forget his pledge when his army defeated the enemy. On the contrary, he and his soldiers to the number of three thousand were forthwith received into the ranks of the Church. This so-called "conversion" did not in the least deter him from continued violence and craft and the same treacherous methods which enabled him to overcome his enemies, both relatives

and kinsmen, were followed by his quarrelsome sons.

Other barbarians had accepted Arian Christianity; the fact that the Franks became orthodox Christians, or Catholics as they were called, determined in no small measure the great part they were to take in early European affairs. In the first place it resulted in an identification of their interests and those of the Church. It was but natural that the Bishop of Rome, or the Pope as he was now called, should favor the one vigorous nation that had accepted the orthodox faith. Again, being Catholics, Clovis and his successors were able to find religious justification for making war on other Teutonic tribes who had espoused Arian Christianity—although, to be sure, without such excuse they undoubtedly would have practiced their aggressions just the same.

When Clovis died in Paris in 511, he had widened his territory to the Loire, the northern boundary of the Visigoths, had conquered the Burgundians and the Alemanni. In other words, he had created a kingdom which included what is now France, Belgium, Holland and part of Germany. Until recent years much credence was placed in a life of Clovis written by Gregory, Bishop of Tours. Lately it has been proved to be inaccurate, although valuable for the light it throws upon an otherwise obscure period.

Wars, murders and strife continued to characterize Merovingian rule. It came about in course of time that the more ambitious warriors were able to make demands of the king in return for military service. They became large landholders and followed him to battle only when granted coveted concessions. The later kings being weaklings who gave themselves up to lives of ease and dissipation, state affairs fell more and more into the hands of the *major domus*, or Mayor of the Palace. He commanded the army and compelled the king to consent to such plans and policies as he initiated. While there had once been four Frankish provinces, each with its Mayor of the Palace, by 681 Pippin had made himself Mayor of them all. Although the Merovingian kings were still allowed to occupy the throne and exercise a few royal prerogatives, it was only a matter of time before those who exercised authority would assume the title as well.

Charles Martel inherited his father's position as Mayor of the Palace and, while he never took the title of king, was in reality the founder of the *Carolingian* line, the word coming from the Latin form of Charles, *Carolus*. In 732 he defeated the Mohamedans on the field of Tours and thus stayed their advance into central Europe from Spain where they had already established themselves. For its importance to later civilization, this famous battle has been regarded as one of the decisive combats of the world, ranking with Marathon and Salamis.

Because Church and State had frequently worked together since the time of Clovis, the Pope asked aid of Charles Martel against the King of the Lombards. As the latter had fought against the Mohammedans on the field of Tours, Charles declined to take sides against him.

Pippin the Short, son of Charles Martel, was his successor. Winning the support of the Papacy, he now deposed the incompetent Merovingian king who nominally held the throne. Bishop Boniface and later the Pope poured sacred oil upon his head, thus giving him the support of the Church in establishing himself upon the throne. Gibbon says: "Thus was a German chieftain transformed into the Lord's anointed." The anger of God was threatened by the Pope upon anyone who contended Pippin's right to rule the Franks.

Pippin's son Charlemagne—or Charles the Great—followed as king of the Franks from 768 to 814. From his accession certainty begins to replace the uncertainty which characterizes the preceding centuries for the historian. His secretary Einhard wrote a life of Charlemagne; many of his edicts survive and records kept in several monasteries verify facts otherwise related of him and his age.

Charlemagne was a man of powerful build and tireless energy. He was a warrior and won much additional land for the Frankish kingdom. He was equally energetic in times of peace, organizing the kingdom he governed. His keen desire to Christianize all conquered peoples caused a rapid spread of Christianity, although his methods were more suited to a Germanic king than to a religion preaching peace and brotherhood of men. Failure to espouse

Christianity was made a capital offense. In response to such convincing argument the tribes he added to the kingdom generally hastened to embrace the new faith. He conceived of bringing all the Germanic peoples into one large kingdom, cementing them together by the Christian religion.

War filled much of his time; the most difficult campaigns were directed against the Saxons, who proved formidable foes. Even when apparently overcome, they revolted again and again.

The Pope had entreated his father, Pippin the Short, to succor him against the Lombards, whereupon he had marched into Italy, chastised the king of Lombardy and taken from him a strip of land which he gave to the Pope. Slight in itself, this was to be the origin of the later *Papal States*, increased by other grants as time went on. Now the Papacy turned to Charlemagne to champion it against the ambitious Lombards. Accordingly, in 773 Charlemagne invaded Italy and captured Pavia, the capital city of Lombardy. The king was forced to become a monk while Charlemagne set the iron crown of the Lombards upon his own head.

Carrying war into Spain, he took lands to the Ebro river, forcing the Mohammedans back. Some historians see in this the first of the many attempts made to expel these Asiatics from Spain.

In 800 A. D., Charlemagne happened to be in Rome. As he knelt at the altar of St. Peter on Christmas Day, the Pope placed a crown upon his head, calling him Roman Emperor.

There was no Emperor in Constantinople at the time. Irene, having deposed her son, occupied the imperial throne. As Charlemagne had conquered northern Italy, his territory reached away to the North Sea and included everything from Spain and the Atlantic to what is now western Russia and what was recently Austria. The great king claimed later that this action of the Pope's was to him wholly unexpected. That in itself has opened the way for much fruitless argument. While probably none at the time realized it, this coronation was to have far-reaching significance for the future. In the first place it meant that the king of

Germany henceforward was the protector of Italy and must come to the aid of Italian subjects as readily as to his Frankish people. Again, if the Pope could bestow temporal power upon a king, he could also deprive him of it. This paved the way for those conflicts between the State and Papacy which in the past have filled the pages of mediæval histories.

To the people generally at the time it merely seemed that the old Roman Empire was again revived with an emperor in the West. From 395 to 476 there had been two rulers, one in Constantinople and one in Rome. Charlemagne was accepted as a successor of Augustus and the great Empire of which men had never ceased to speak appeared to be once more established.

After the time of Charlemagne conditions in Europe never again went back to the chaotic state that followed the first invasions of the Teutons, although the ninth century was one of violence and confusion. To some extent the amalgamation of the Græco-Roman civilization with the Germanic had taken place, while Christianity was to prove a firm bond in unifying peoples of unlike origins.

Thus, in the chain of events which were shaping those groups of people later to evolve into modern European nations, the part of the Franks proved to be productive of results by no means apparent at the time.

CHARLEMAGNE

“Charles was large and strong, and of lofty stature, though not disproportionately tall (his height is well known to have been seven times the length of his foot); the upper part of his head was round, his eyes very large and animated, nose a little long, hair fair, and face laughing and merry. Thus his appearance was always stately and dignified, whether he was standing or sitting; although his neck was thick and somewhat short, and his belly rather prominent; but the symmetry of the rest of his body concealed these defects. His gait was firm, his whole carriage manly, and his voice clear, but not so strong as his size led one to expect. His health was excellent, except during the four years preceding his death, when he was subject to frequent fevers; at the last he even limped a little with one foot. Even in those years he consulted rather his own inclinations than the advice of physicians, who were almost hateful to him, because they wanted him to give up roasts, to which he was accustomed, and to eat boiled meat instead. In accordance with the national custom, he took frequent exercise on horseback and in the chase, accomplishments in which scarcely any people in the world can equal the Franks. He enjoyed the exhalations from natural warm springs, and often practised swimming, in which he was such an adept that none could surpass him; and hence it was that he built his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle, and lived there constantly during his latter years until his death. He used not only to invite his sons to his bath, but his nobles and friends, and now and then a troop of his retinue or body-guard, so that a hundred or more persons sometimes bathed with him.

He used to wear the national, that is to say, the Frank dress—next his skin a linen shirt and linen breeches, and above these a tunic fringed with silk; while hose fastened by

bands covered his lower limbs, and shoes his feet, and he protected his shoulders and chest in winter by a closely fitting coat of otter or marten skins. Over all he flung a blue cloak, and he always had a sword girt about him, usually one with a gold or silver hilt and belt; he sometimes carried a jeweled sword, but only on great feast-days or at the reception of ambassadors from foreign nations. He despised foreign costumes, however handsome, and never allowed himself to be robed in them, except twice in Rome, when he donned the Roman tunic, chlamys, and shoes; the first time at the request of Pope Hadrian, the second to gratify Leo, Hadrian's successor. On great feast-days he made use of embroidered clothes, and shoes bedecked with precious stones; his cloak was fastened by a golden buckle, and he appeared crowned with a diadem of gold and gems; but on other days his dress varied little from the common dress of the people.

Charles was temperate in eating, and particularly so in drinking, for he abominated drunkenness in anybody, much more in himself and those of his household; but he could not easily abstain from food, and often complained that fasts injured his health. He very rarely gave entertainments, only on great feast-days, and then to large numbers of people. His meals ordinarily consisted of four courses, not counting the roast, which his huntsmen used to bring in on the spit; he was more fond of this than of any other dish. While at table, he listened to reading or music. The subjects of the readings were the stories and deeds of olden time; he was fond, too, of St. Augustine's books, and especially of the one entitled "The City of God." He was so moderate in the use of wine and all sorts of drink that he rarely allowed himself more than three cups in the course of a meal. In summer, after the midday meal, he would eat some fruit, drain a single cup, put off his clothes and shoes, just as he did for the night, and rest for two or three hours. He was in the habit of awaking and rising from bed four or five times during the night. While he was dressing and putting on his shoes, he not only gave audience to his friends, but if the Count of the Palace told him of any suit in which judgment was necessary, he had the parties

brought before him forthwith, took cognizance of the case, and gave his decision, just as if he were sitting on the judgment-seat. This was not the only business that he transacted at this time, but he performed any duty of the day whatever whether he had to attend to the matter himself or to give commands concerning it to his officers.

Charles had the gift of ready and fluent speech, and could express whatever he had to say with the utmost clearness. He was not satisfied with command of his native language merely, but gave attention to the study of foreign ones, and in particular was such a master of Latin that he could speak it as well as his native tongue; but he could understand Greek better than he could speak it. He was so eloquent, indeed, that he might have passed for a teacher of eloquence. He most zealously cultivated the liberal arts, held those who taught them in great esteem, and conferred great honours upon them. He took lessons in grammar of the deacon Peter of Pisa, at that time an aged man. Another deacon, Albin of Britain, surnamed Alcuin, a man of Saxon extraction, who was the greatest scholar of the day, was his teacher in other branches of learning. The King spent much time and labour with him studying rhetoric, dialectics, and especially astronomy; he learned to reckon, and used to investigate the motions of the heavenly bodies most curiously, with an intelligent scrutiny. He also tried to write, and used to keep tablets and blanks in bed under his pillow, that at leisure hours he might accustom his hand to form the letters; however, as he did not begin his efforts in due season, but late in life, they met with ill success.

He cherished with the greatest fervour and devotion the principles of the Christian religion, which had been instilled into him from infancy. Hence it was that he built the beautiful basilica at Aix-la-Chapelle, which he adorned with gold and silver and lamps, and with rails and doors of solid brass. He had the columns and marbles for this structure brought from Rome and Ravenna, for he could not find such as were suitable elsewhere. He was a constant worshipper at this church as long as his health permitted, going morning and evening, even after nightfall, besides attend-

ing mass; and he took care that all the services there conducted should be administered with the utmost possible propriety, very often warning the sextons not to let any improper or unclean thing be brought into the building, or remain in it. He provided it with a great number of sacred vessels of gold and silver, and with such a quantity of clerical robes that not even the doorkeepers, who fill the humblest office in the church, were obliged to wear their everyday clothes when in the exercise of their duties. He was at great pains to improve the church reading and psalmody, for he was well skilled in both, although he neither read in public nor sang, except in a low tone and with others.

He was very forward in succoring the poor, and in that gratuitous generosity which the Greeks call alms, so much so that he not only made a point of giving in his own country and his own kingdom, but when he discovered that there were Christians living in poverty in Syria, Egypt, and Africa, at Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Carthage, he had compassion on their wants, and used to send money over the seas to them. The reason that he zealously strove to make friends with the kings beyond the seas was that he might get help and relief to the Christians living under their rule. He cherished the Church of St. Peter the Apostle at Rome above all other holy and sacred places, and heaped its treasury with a vast wealth of gold, silver, and precious stones. He sent great and countless gifts to the popes; and throughout his whole reign the wish that he had nearest at heart was to re-establish the ancient authority of the city of Rome under his care and by his influence, and to defend and protect the Church of St. Peter, and to beautify and enrich it out of his own store above all other churches. Although he held it in such veneration, he only repaired to Rome to pay his vows and make his supplications four times during the whole forty-seven years that he reigned.

When he made his last journey thither, he had also other ends in view. The Romans had inflicted many injuries upon the Pontiff Leo, tearing out his eyes and cutting out his tongue, so that he had been compelled to call upon the King for help. Charles accordingly went to Rome, to set in order the affairs of the church, which were in great confusion, and

passed the whole winter there. It was then that he received the titles of Emperor and Augustus, to which he at first had such an aversion that he declared that he would not have set foot in the church the day that they were conferred, although it was a great feast-day, if he could have foreseen the design of the Pope. He bore very patiently with the jealousy which the Roman emperors showed upon his assuming these titles, for they took this step very ill; and by dint of frequent embassies and letters, in which he addressed them as brothers, he made their haughtiness yield to his magnanimity, a quality in which he was unquestionably much their superior."

—*From Einhard's Life of Charlemagne.*

RISE OF ISLAM

MANY scholars today regard Arabia as the earliest home of the human race. As it is for the most part an arid peninsula, wave after wave of people has been ejected from it in course of several millenniums, as overcrowding and scarcity of food for men and beasts forced them to seek new abodes. The Hamitic tribes pushed into Egypt and may have been the first inhabitants of that country. The Turanians are said to have pressed east and to have been the progenitors of the Mongolian race; the Semitics, as we have seen in our study of the Babylonians, were precipitated by several successive invasions into the fertile lands of Mesopotamia. Arabia is believed to have been the mother of them all.

Little is known of this peninsula in antiquity. By the fifth century of our era it was peopled by numerous tribes, often at war with one another, recognizing no central authority. Rivalry for the limited fertile vales and pasturage was keen and gave rise to much bloodshed. While differing among themselves in their manners and customs, they were alike in being cruel, easily incited to raid upon each other, and in their worship of many gods. Stones, trees and springs were objects of veneration while, like many other early peoples, they regarded mountains as holy. Certain shrines were held in common. One of these was located in the city of Mecca, a trading center situated directly on an ancient highway to Syria.

“Mecca was, at the time, a city of considerable importance and note among the townships of Arabia, both from its associations and its position. Situated in a low-lying valley stretching north to south, bordered on the west by a range of hills, on the east by high granite rocks—the Kaaba in its center, its regular and paved streets, its fortified houses, its public hall opening on to the platform of the



PORTRAIT OF SULTAN MOHAMMED II. *Bellini*

Besides being a great piece of art, this picture is remarkable because the Moslems hold with the ancient Hebrews that it is sinful to make likenesses of natural objects, and because it reveals a surprising degree of amity between Christian Venice and Moslem Asia.

temple, the city presented an unusual appearance of prosperity and strength."¹

The Kaaba, a cube-shaped stone temple, about fifty feet in height, contained in one of its outer walls a peculiar black stone, a few inches in width and probably of meteoric origin. This was held in most sacred veneration and from remote times a truce was granted for a part of each year so that pilgrims who gathered to pass seven times around the building, with ceremonies and observances, might not be molested. Sometimes war infested these sacred months but such violations of the truce were regarded as sacriligious.

The custody of the Kaaba and of the well in the town were coveted trusts of honor and responsibility. Sometimes one tribe, sometimes another was able to gain the custody of these objects. Kossay, a tribal chief, got control of Mecca in the fifth century and established its administration on a basis which was generally adhered to thereafter. He levied a small tax upon his people to provide for needy pilgrims who annually visited the shrine. After his death hostilities again ensued. Pilgrims were often molested and sometimes shamefully robbed.

The year 570 A. D. saw the birth of the great Arabian law-giver and religious teacher who was to accomplish marvellous results in this country, torn by dissension and hostility. His father was killed before his birth and his mother died while he was a young child. Thereupon his grandfather cared for him until he also was removed by death; henceforth he was under the authority of his paternal uncle. Although both his grandfather and uncle were strongly attached to him, the loneliness he experienced in his boyhood and youth caused him ever after to be sensitive to the woes of childhood. His people were poor and his uncle used to send him out as a camel-driver to insure safe conduct for trade caravans. He discharged important business for a widow, one Khadija, who was wealthy according to the standards of those days. So well did he discharge the duties entrusted to him and so favorably did she grow to think of him that they were later married. In spite of disparity in their ages, the union was happy throughout.

During his boyhood and early life Mahomet was dis-

tressed by the anarchy around him. The people had sunk to a low moral state; their worship was corrupt and demoralizing; women and children were utterly at the mercy of the men who were cruel and despotic. Within Mecca the strife was hot between jealous factions; without, open fighting or unexpected raids made life unsafe.

"Before him lay his country, bleeding and torn by fratricidal wars and inter-tribal dissensions, his people sunk in ignorance, addicted to obscene rites and superstitions, and, with all their desert virtues, lawless and cruel. His two visits to Syria had opened to him a scene of unutterable moral and social desolation; rival creeds and sects tearing each other to pieces, wrangling over the body of the God they pretended to worship, carrying their hatred to the valleys and deserts of Hejaz, and rending the townships of Arabia with their quarrels and bitterness. The picture before him was one of dreary hopelessness. The few who, abandoning their ancient beliefs, were groping in the dark for some resting-place, represented a general feeling of unrest. In their minds there was nothing capable of appealing to the humanity beyond themselves. Mahomet's soul was soaring aloft, trying to peer into the mysteries of creation, of life and death, of good and evil, to find order out of chaos.'"²

The loneliness of the desert, the forbidding aspects of nature that appear to leave man helpless and impel him to seek to propitiate the powers that govern the universe, have ever led sensitive souls to meditate and try to pierce the veil that separates the visible and invisible. It was not strange that Mahomet should have retreated to a nearby mountain at times to ponder upon the conflicting forces around him. Many Jews had fled to Arabia to escape animosities in other lands; as a rule they were traders. Numerous Christians, both as hermits and sects, had also sought safety in the natural fortresses of this inaccessible country. Jews and Christians were alike torn with dissensions and strife. It was indeed a situation to appall a humane and thoughtful spirit.

In the clear air of the desert the heavens seem near and the nights commune with those attuned to listen. This is

sufficiently attested by the fact that several of the great world religions have had their beginnings in Western Asia. Like many a prophet before him, Mahomet thought the voice of God told him to proclaim one eternal principle in place of manifold gods; to bring the tidings to all men that one God reigneth. Whatever the shortcomings of Islam may be, none who approach the subject with a fair mind can question the sincerity of Mahomet in his belief that the call to redeem his nation came to him personally. Like Samuel, he was impressed by his unfitness for the work. Uneducated, having had no experience in public affairs, even in the simple way in which these were then administered, he was alarmed at the responsibility placed upon him and feared that his own sanity was breaking down. Gradually he gathered courage to face the mission that he more and more became persuaded had been divinely laid upon him.

“The Father of Truth chooses His own prophets, and He speaks to them in a voice stronger than thunder. It is the same inner voice through which God speaks to all of us. That voice may dwindle away, and become hardly audible; it may lose its divine accent, and sink into the language of worldly prudence; but it may also from time to time assume its real nature with the chosen of God, and sound in their ears as a voice from Heaven.” So Dean Stanley speaks of it in connection with Samuel; so did it appear to Mahomet.

His wife Khadija was his first sympathizer and convert. Other members of his family slowly joined him. But the ferocity of primitive people displayed itself toward those who forsook the worship of stones and trees, the ancient fetishes, for the faith of the prophet within their midst. Religious persecutions have always been bitter; even today they are not unknown. The surer people have felt that those espousing a faith unlike their own were in the wrong, the more terrible have been the injuries they have inflicted upon dissenters.

What Mahomet taught in these first years may be judged from the following experience that has survived. So relentlessly were his followers persecuted that some of them fled to shores of the Negus to remain until they might re-

turn with safety. The authorities sent to the king of the Najashi requesting the surrender of these men, whereupon the king of this tribe asked them: "What is this religion for which you have abandoned your former faith and adopted neither mine nor that of any other people?" One acting as spokesman for the others answered him: "O king, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies, and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity and the duties of hospitality and neighborhood; we knew no law but that of the strong, when God raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols; and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbors; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to flee from vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God, and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to thy country and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression."

Such is the tradition which survives and whether or not it can be accepted as historically accurate, it summarizes very well the conditions obtaining for some years. Many of the new converts were not so fortunate as these. They were taken to the scorching desert and left to die unless they would return to the polytheism of their fathers. Those in political authority in Mecca felt it incumbent upon them to maintain the *status quo*, lest the new religion might in some way wrest power from their tribe.

The Koran was written by the disciples of Mahomet after his death, they inscribing such of his teachings as they

could remember. Many of the impassioned talks he gave those who would listen during these first years are found therein. Learning having been largely handed down by word of mouth from time immemorial, it is likely that the prophet's own words are frequently preserved. Through the unity of nature he tried to impress upon unbelievers the unity of God as well.

“Look round yourself: is this wonderful world, the sun, the moon, and the stars, holding their swift silent course in the blue vault of heaven, the law and system prevailing in the universe; the rain-drops falling to revive the parched earth into life; the ships moving across the ocean, beladen with what is profitable to mankind; the beautiful palm covered with its golden fruit—are these the handiwork of your wooden or stone gods? . . .

“Fools! do you want a sign, when the whole creation is full of the signs of God? The structure of your body, how wonderfully complex, how beautifully regulated; the alternations of night and day, of life and death; your sleeping and awaking; your desire to accumulate from the abundance of God; the winds driving abroad the pregnant clouds as the forerunners of the Creator's mercy; the harmony and order in the midst of diversity; the variety of the human race, and yet their close affinity; fruits, flowers, animals, human beings themselves—are these not signs enough of the presence of a Master-Mind?”³

The people were angry with him and met his arguments by a fury as intense as that which had characterized the struggle between Arian and orthodox Christians. Finally Mahomet felt it necessary to escape with his band of faithful adherents. They slipped away under cover of night to a cave and finally reached Medina. This happened in 622 and is known as the Hegira or Flight. Among the followers of Islam this was taken as year 1, all chronology being reckoned on this basis—so many years prior to or subsequent to the Hegira, just as in Christian lands the year of the birth of Christ gives the basis of calculation.

Medina lay about “eleven days' journey” north of Mecca. Having no wall around it, the refugees constructed a moat in order to defend themselves against the enemies

of Mecca, who they knew would soon ride out with desert reënforcements to overcome them. The town had been settled by the Amalekites and bore the name of one of their chieftains; it was now renamed *Medina*, the *city which excels*.

Not only the Arabs but the Jews caused many outbreaks of hostility and the followers of Islam, in order to protect themselves, found it necessary to resort to the sword, the only language understood by Arabians of that generation. Having won many converts, Mahomet made himself supreme in Medina and later captured Mecca.

“The conquest of Mecca decided the fate of idolatry in Arabia. The people who still regarded with veneration those beautiful moon-goddesses and their peculiar cult, were painfully awakened by the fall of its stronghold. Among the wild denizens of the desert the moral effect of the submission of the Meccans was great. Deputations began to arrive from all sides to tender allegiance and adherence of tribes hitherto most inimical to the Moslems. The principal companions of the Prophet, and the leading citizens of Medina, at his request, received these envoys in their houses, and entertained them with the time-honoured hospitality of the Arabs. . . . A written treaty, guaranteeing the privileges of the tribe, was often granted, and a teacher invariably accompanied the departing guests to instruct the newly-converted people in the duties of Islam, and to see that every remnant of idolatry was obliterated from their midst.”⁴

Mahomet died in 632, just ten years after the flight from Mecca. The rapidity with which his teachings spread through Arabia must always be regarded as phenomenal. Ameer Ali, from whose highly instructive book on the *Spirit of Islam*, several citations have already been made in this chapter, contrasts the conditions prevailing before the promulgation of the new faith and after these brief ten years. “From time immemorial the Peninsula had been wrapped in absolute darkness. Spiritual life was utterly unknown. Neither Judaism nor Christianity had made any lasting impression on the Arab mind. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. Incest and the diabolical

custom of female infanticide were common. . . . What a change had these few years witnessed! The angel of heaven had veritably passed over the land, and breathed harmony and love into the hearts of those who had hitherto been engrossed in the most revolting practices of semi-barbarism. What had once been a moral desert, where all laws, human and divine, were contemned and infringed without remorse, was now transformed into a garden. Idolatry, with its nameless abominations, was utterly destroyed. . . . Mahomet was the source, under Providence, of this new awakening—the bright fountain from which flowed the stream of their hopes of eternity; and to him they paid a fitting obedience and reverence.”⁵

The word *caliph* means *successor*; Omar was caliph from 634-644; under his leadership Syria, Egypt and Persia were won for Islam. To have a more central administrative center, Damascus was chosen for the capital. In 762 a new line of caliphs, or successors to Mahomet, followed. Bagdad was founded and in the ninth century was the largest and most splendid city in the world. It is said that two million people dwelt within it. Here the *Arabian Nights* had their beginnings as a collection of tales, although many of the individual stories were much older.

The Arabs, intoxicated with their marvellous success, swept from northern Africa into Spain, where they found the Visigoths able to offer but weak opposition. Having taken the Spanish peninsula, they crossed the Pyrenees and invaded the territory of the Franks, whereupon Charles won his name *Martel*, or hammer, because he hammered away so effectively against them on the field of Tours.

Undoubtedly it was better for the future that Europe was saved from Eastern civilization and allowed to develop without closer contact with oriental influences. Christianity is a far loftier religion than Islam and better suited to the Western mind. However, we of the West ordinarily hear of Islam from its opponents and few who condemn it are actually familiar with the teachings of Mahomet. The blighting effect of Turkish government is too often confused with Mohammedanism, whereas the Turks are a composite people having more Mongol than other racial ele-

ments. Again, there is no doubt but that the later caliphs, incited by the love of power, departed from the tenets of their prophet as did also adherents of the religion of the Prince of Peace. When the horsemen scurried over the desert sands, offering all they met the choice of Islam or the sword, the situation was similar to that in Saxony when Charlemagne offered the Saxons Christianity or death and on a single day executed 4,500 who refused to forsake their ancient faith. In both cases, the mercy and compassion so earnestly taught by the founders were lacking in those who espoused their doctrines.

There is no doubt but that this unprecedented spread of Islam caused the Christian Church to rouse from its internal strifes and fruitless arguments over the substance of Christ the Son and the Father and all kindred themes and experience a deeper religious fervor. Since we are studying the development of Europe rather than Asia and are concerned only with factors influencing western growth, we cannot dwell upon the many interesting phases of Islam, a religion having today more than two hundred million adherents. The fact that the places in Palestine sacred to Christians fell into the possession of those embracing Islam; that the teachings of Mahomet swept like a fire over three continents within a comparatively short time and threatened Christian Europe; that at this time Eastern civilization was in advance of Western—all these affected the thought of the age and gave impulse to new movements, as we shall see.

While we of the West could not adopt the religion of Mahomet, we may, nevertheless, understand that it was peculiarly adapted to Arabian tribes. Long after the Teutonic tribes accepted Christianity their earlier gods still hovered over them and their pagan customs continued; Islam was able to crush out the earlier superstitions of its converts with curious finality. It could not be expected that from a benighted state such as that of Arabia men could be immediately won for the highest spiritual conceptions; as a stage of development on the long journey upward, Islam has filled an important place.

It enjoins its believers to pray five times daily, with their

faces toward Mecca—their sacred city; to give alms to the needy; to fast from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan; to make a pilgrimage if possible during their lifetime to the holy city; and above all to accept the teaching that there is but one God, Allah, and that Mahomet is his prophet. Allah had been from remote antiquity the name for the most powerful of their gods. Mahomet taught that there is no god but God, or Allah.

Considerable study is required to make the Koran absorbing to the average person. Some of its chapters or *Suras* are beautiful and not unlike the biblical Psalms; some are very material. It is probable that Mahomet heard the reading of the Scriptures in Christian chapels; he certainly came into close contact with the Jews and was familiar with their religious writing. Much that he heard he did not understand. Phrases were sometimes impressed upon his mind, to find their way later in his own sayings. His interpretation of nature's teachings and his ethical admonishments to his countrymen were adapted to them as no guidance from without Arabia could have been. It is easy to point out the shortcomings of the religion he founded and the people who embraced it. It is impossible to fully account for the remarkable success of the faith and its persistent endurance in Western Asia.

¹ Ameer Ali, Syed: *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 2.

² Ibid., p. 15.

³ Koran XXV; VI.

⁴ Ameer Ali, Syed: *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 33.

⁵ See First Year, Part III.

FROM THE KORAN

ENTITLED, ARE DISTINCTLY EXPLAINED; REVEALED AT MECCA

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

This is a revelation from the most Merciful: a book the verses whereof are distinctly explained, an Arabic Koran for the instruction of people who understand; bearing good tidings, and denouncing threats: but the greater part of them turn aside, and harken not thereto. And they say; Our hearts are veiled from the doctrine to which thou invitest us; and there is a deafness in our ears, and a curtain between us and thee: wherefore act thou as thou shalt think fit; for we shall act according to our own sentiments. Say, Verily I am only a man like you. It is revealed unto me that your God is one God: wherefore direct your way straight unto him; and ask pardon of him for what is past. And woe be to the idolaters; who give not the appointed alms, and believe not in the life to come! But as those who believe and work righteousness; they shall receive an everlasting reward.

* * * * *

ENTITLED, THUNDER; REVEALED AT MECCA

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

These are the signs of the book of the Koran: and that which hath been sent down unto thee from thy Lord is the truth; but the greater part of men will not believe. It is God who hath raised the heavens without visible pillars; and then ascended his throne, and compelled the sun and the moon to perform their services: every one of the heavenly bodies runneth an appointed course. He ordereth all things. He showeth his signs distinctly, that ye may be assured ye must meet your Lord at the last day. It is he who hath stretched forth the earth, and placed therein steadfast mountains, and rivers; and hath ordained therein of every fruit two different kinds. He causeth the night to cover the day. Herein are certain signs unto people who consider. And in the earth are tracts of land of different natures, though bordering on each other; and also vine-

yards, and seeds, and palm-trees springing several from the same root, and singly from distinct roots. They are watered with the same water, yet we render some of them more excellent than others to eat. Herein are surely signs unto people who understand. . . .

This is the description of paradise, which is promised to the pious. It is watered by rivers; its food is perpetual, and its shade also: this shall be the reward of those who fear God. But the reward of the infidels shall be hell fire. Those to whom we have given the scriptures, rejoice at what hath been revealed unto thee. Yet there are some of the confederates who deny part thereof. Say unto them, Verily I am commanded to worship God alone; and to give him no companion: upon him do I call, and unto him shall I return. To this purpose have we sent down the Koran, a rule of judgment, in the Arabic language. And verily if thou follow their desires, after the knowledge which hath been given thee, there shall be none to defend or protect thee against God. We have formerly sent apostles before thee. Every age hath its book of revelation: God shall abolish and shall confirm what he pleaseth.

* * * * *

It is God who hath created the heavens and the earth; and causeth water to descend from heaven, and by means thereof produceth fruits for your sustenance: and by his command he obligeth the ships to sail in the sea for your service; and he also forceth the rivers to supply your uses: he likewise compelleth the sun and the moon, which diligently perform their courses, to serve you; and hath subjected the day and the night to your service. He giveth you of every thing which ye ask him; and if ye attempt to reckon up the favors of God, ye shall not be able to compute the same. . . .

Think not therefore, O prophet, that God will be contrary to his promise of assistance, made unto his apostles; for God is mighty, able to avenge. The day will come, when the earth shall be changed into another earth, and the heavens into other heavens; and men shall come forth from their graves to appear before the only, the mighty God.

And thou shalt see the wicked on that day bound together in fetters: their inner garments shall be of pitch, and fire shall cover their faces; that God may reward every soul, according to what it shall have deserved; for God is swift in taking an account. This is a sufficient admonition unto men, that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that there is but one God; and that those who are endued with understanding may consider.

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Perform your covenant with God, when ye enter into covenant with him; and violate not your oaths, after the ratification thereof; since ye have made God a witness over you. Verily God knoweth that which ye do. And be not like unto her who undoeth that which she hath spun, untwisting it after she hath twisted it strongly; taking your oaths between you deceitfully, because one party is more numerous than another party. Verily God only tempteth you therein; and he will make that manifest unto you, on the day of resurrection, concerning which ye now disagree. If God had pleased, he would surely have made you one people; but he will lead into error whom he pleaseth, and he will direct whom he pleaseth; and ye shall surely give an account of that which ye have done. Therefore take not your oaths between you deceitfully, lest your foot slip, after it hath been steadfastly fixed, and ye taste evil in this life, for that ye have turned aside from the way of God; and ye suffer a grievous punishment in the life to come. And sell not the covenant of God for a small price; for with God is a better recompense prepared for you, if ye be men of understanding. That which is with you will fail; but that which is with God is permanent; and we will surely reward those who shall persevere, according to the utmost merit of their actions.

ENTITLED, THE CREATOR: REVEALED AT MECCA

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise be unto God, the Creator of heaven and earth;
who maketh the angels his messengers, furnished with two,

and three, and four pair of wings: God maketh what he pleaseth unto his creatures; for God is almighty. The mercy which God shall freely bestow on mankind, there is none who can withhold; and what he shall withhold, there is none who can bestow, besides him: and he is the mighty, the wise. O men, remember the favor of God toward you: is there any creator, besides God, who provideth food for you from heaven and earth? There is no God but he: how therefore are ye turned aside from acknowledging his unity? If they accuse thee of imposture, apostles before thee have also been accused of imposture; and unto God shall all things return.

O men, verily the promise of God is true: let not therefore the present life deceive you, neither let the deceiver deceive you concerning God: for Satan is an enemy unto you; wherefore hold him for an enemy: he only inviteth his confederates to be the inhabitants of hell. For those who believe not there is prepared a severe torment: but for those who shall believe and do that which is right is prepared mercy and a great reward. Shall he therefore for whom his evil work hath been prepared, and who imagineth it to be good, be as he who is rightly disposed and discerneth the truth? Verily God will cause to err whom he pleaseth, and will direct whom he pleaseth. Let not thy soul therefore be spent in sighs for their sakes, on account of their obstinacy; for God well knoweth that which they do.

It is God who sendeth the winds, and raiseth a cloud; and we drive the same unto a dread country, and thereby quicken the earth after it hath been dead: so shall the resurrection be. Whoever desireth excellence, unto God doth all excellence belong; unto him ascendeth the good speech; and the righteous work will he exalt. But as for them who devise wicked plots, they shall suffer a severe punishment; and the device of those men shall be rendered vain. God created you first of the dust, and afterward of seed; and he hath made you man and wife. No female conceiveth, or bringeth forth, but with his knowledge. Nor is anything added unto the age of him whose life is prolonged, neither is anything diminished from his age, but the same is written in the book of God's decrees. Verily this is easy with God. The two

seas are not to be held in comparison: this is fresh and sweet, pleasant to drink; but that is salt and bitter: yet out of each of them ye eat fish, and take ornaments for you to wear. Thou seest the ships also plowing the waves thereof, that ye may seek to enrich yourselves by commerce, of the abundance of God: peradventure ye will be thankful. He causeth the night to succeed the day, and he causeth the day to succeed the night; and he obligeth the sun and the moon to perform their services: each of them runneth an appointed course. This is God, your Lord: his is the kingdom. But the idols which ye invoke besides him have not the power even over the skin of a datestone: if ye invoke them, they will not hear your calling; and although they should hear, yet they would not answer you. On the day of resurrection they shall disclaim your having associated them with God: and none shall declare unto thee the truth, like one who is well acquainted therewith.

O men, ye have need of God; but God is self-sufficient, and to be praised. If he pleaseth, he can take you away, and produce a new creature in your stead: neither will this be difficult with God. A burdened soul shall not bear the burden of another: and if a heavy-burdened soul call on another to bear part of its burden, no part thereof shall be borne by the person who shall be called on, although he be ever so nearly related. Thou shalt admonish those who fear their Lord in secret, and are constant at prayer: and whoever cleanseth himself from the guilt of disobedience cleanseth himself to the advantage of his own soul; for all shall be assembled before God at the last day. The blind and the seeing shall not be held equal; neither darkness and light; nor cool shade and the scorching wind: neither shall the living and the dead be held equal. God shall cause him to hear whom he pleaseth: but thou shalt not make those to hear who are in their graves. Thou art no other than a preacher: verily we have sent thee with truth, a bearer of good tidings, and a denouncer of threats. There hath been no nation, but a preacher hath in past times been conversant among them: if they charge thee with imposture, they who were before them likewise charged their apostles with imposture. Their apostles came unto them with evident miracles, and with

divine writings, and with the enlightening book: afterward I chastised those who were unbelievers, and how severe was my vengeance! Dost thou not see that God sendeth down rain from heaven, and that we thereby produce fruits of various colors? In the mountain also there are some tracts white and red, of various colors; and others are of a deep black: and of men, and beasts, and cattle there are whose colors are in like manner various. Such only of his servants fear God as are endued with understanding: verily God is mighty and ready to forgive.

Verily they who read the book of God, and are constant at prayer, and give alms out of what we have bestowed on them, both in secret and openly, hope for a merchandise which shall not perish: that God may fully pay them their wages, and make them a superabundant addition of his liberality; for he is ready to forgive the faults of his servants, and to requite their endeavors. That which we have revealed unto thee of the book of the Koran, is the truth, confirming the scriptures which were revealed before it; for God knoweth and regardeth his servants.

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ENTITLED, THE INEVITABLE; REVEALED AT MECCA

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

When the inevitable day of judgment shall suddenly come, no soul shall charge the perdition of its coming with falsehood: it will abase some, and exalt others. When the earth shall be shaken with a violent shock; and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad; and ye shall be separated into three distinct classes: the companions of the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be!), and the companions of the left hand (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!), and those who have preceded others in the faith, shall precede them to paradise. These are they who shall approach near unto God: they shall dwell in gardens of delight. (There shall be many of the former religions; and few of the last.) Reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths which shall continue in their

bloom forever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets, and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine: their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed: and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose, and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire. And there shall accompany them fair damsels having large black eyes; resembling pearls hidden in their shells: as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! Peace! And the companions of the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be!) shall have their abode among the lote-trees free from thorns, and trees of mauz loaded regularly with their produce from top to bottom; under an extended shade, near a flowing water, and amidst fruits in abundance, which shall not fail, nor shall be forbidden to be gathered: and they shall repose themselves on lofty beds. . . .

And the companions of the left hand (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!) shall dwell amidst burning winds, and scalding water, under the shade of a black smoke, neither cool nor agreeable. For they enjoyed the pleasures of life before this, while on earth; and obstinately persisted in a heinous wickedness: and they said, After we shall have died, and become dust and bones, shall we surely be raised to life? Shall our forefathers also be raised with us? Say, Verily both the first and the last shall be surely gathered together to judgment, at the prefixed time of a known day. Then ye, O men, who have erred, and denied the resurrection as a falsehood, shall surely eat of the fruit of the tree of al Zakkum, and shall fill your bellies therewith: and ye shall drink thereon boiling water; and ye shall drink as a thirsty camel drinketh. This shall be their entertainment on the day of judgment.

ENTITLED, IRON; REVEALED AT MECCA, OR AT MEDINA

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Whatever is in heaven and earth singeth praise unto God; and he is mighty and wise. His is the kingdom of

heaven and earth; he giveth life, and he putteth to death; and he is almighty. He is the first and the last; the manifest and the hidden; and he knoweth all things. It is he who created the heavens and the earth in six days; and then ascended his throne. He knoweth that which entereth into the earth, and that which issueth out of the same; and that which descendeth from heaven, and that which ascendeth thereto: and he is with you wheresoever ye be: for God seeth that which ye do. His is the kingdom of heaven and earth: and unto God shall all things return. He causeth the night to succeed the day, and he causeth the day to succeed the night; and he knoweth the innermost part of men's hearts.

Believe in God and his apostle, and lay out in alms a part of the wealth whereof God hath made you inheritors: for unto such of you as believe, and bestow alms, shall be given a great reward. And what aileth you, that ye believe not in God, when the apostles inviteth you to believe in your Lord; and he hath received your covenant concerning this matter, if ye believe any proposition? It is he who hath sent down unto his servant evident signs, that he may lead you out of darkness into light; for God is compassionate and merciful unto you. And what aileth you, that ye contribute not of your substance for the defense of God's true religion? Since unto God appertaineth the inheritance of heaven and earth. . . .

Who is he that will lend unto God an acceptable loan? for he will double the same unto him, and he shall receive moreover an honorable reward. On a certain day, thou shalt see the true believers, men and women; their light shall run before them, and on their right hands; and it shall be said unto them, Good tidings unto you this day: gardens through which rivers flow; ye shall remain therein forever. This will be great felicity. On that day the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women shall say unto those who believe, Stay for us, that we may borrow some of your light. It shall be answered, Return back into the world, and seek light. And a high wall shall be set betwixt them, wherein shall be a gate, within which shall be mercy; and without it, over against the same, the torment of hell. The hypo-

crites shall call out unto the true believers, saying, Were we not with you? They shall answer, Yea; but ye seduced your own souls by your hypocrisy; and ye waited our ruin; and ye doubted concerning the faith; and your wishes deceived you, until the decree of God came, and ye died; and the deceiver deceived you concerning God. This day, therefore, a ransom shall not be accepted of you, nor of those who have been unbelievers. Your abode shall be hell fire: this is what ye have deserved; and an unhappy journey shall it be thither. . .

We formerly sent our apostles with evident miracles and arguments; and we sent down with them the scriptures and the balance, that men might observe justice; and we sent them down iron, wherein is mighty strength for war, and various advantages unto mankind: that God may know who assisteth him and his apostles in secret; for God is strong and mighty. We formerly sent Noah and Abraham, and we established in their posterity the gift of prophecy, and the scripture: and of them some were directed, but many of them were evil-doers. Afterward we caused our apostles to succeed in their footsteps; and we caused Jesus the son of Mary to succeed them, and we gave him the gospel: and we put in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy: . . .

O ye who believe in the former prophets, fear God, and believe in his apostle Mahomet: he will give you two portions of his mercy, and he will ordain you a light wherein ye may walk, and he will forgive you; for God is ready to forgive and merciful: that those who have received the scriptures may know that they have not power over any of the favors of God, and that good is in the hand of God; he bestoweth the same on whom he pleaseth, for God is endued with great beneficence.*

*Trans. by George Sale.



SPRINGTIME ON A FEUDAL MANOR (1415)

Observe the streamers to frighten the birds, such as the Chinese use today, the wooden plow with the stone, and the sower. The moated and walled castle towers in the background.

FEUDALISM

WHEN Rome could no longer protect her citizens against invading Germans, usurpers or marauders, it became imperative that they seek protection in other ways. The wealthy and powerful, possessing large villas or wide domains, soon gathered around them able-bodied men who could defend their property. The districts over which the main streams of Teutons spread were generally laid waste and frequently all vestige of earlier occupancy and ownership was obliterated. However, away from such areas of devastation, regions were often left alone save as stragglers or adventurers, taking advantage of the general disorder, might infest them. Well-organized defense was quickly rallied by the capable and efficient, around whom the weaker tended to gather, as in all times of calamity. It often came about that small land-owners, realizing their utter helplessness in face of such constantly recurring disorder, would give their holdings to some large landed proprietor in order to come under his protection. They would continue to dwell upon them and their children might do so, indefinitely. Yet such tenure was after all a *precarium*, revocable at the owner's will. As a matter of fact, custom insured continuity of occupation although no legal right to it longer existed. It should be remembered that protection was greatly needed in the early Middle Ages, when life at best was unsafe and when none could with any certainty forecast the future. Again, the owner of extensive tracts required people to till the soil and produce food for those who dwelt on his vast holdings; so such an arrangement as this was mutually advantageous and very common.

When the Germans pressed into central and southern Europe they did not reward their warriors who enabled them to conquer new territories with money but with land.

Money was scarce during these early centuries; the conditions were not favorable for the development of mines; indeed, comparatively few silver and gold mines had been operated in Europe anyway. Land was the most abundant commodity and to their *comitatus*, or companions-at-arms, kings made extensive grants. The principal business of the age being fighting, these warriors subdivided such grants among their vassals, who in turn might each reparcel his share until, finally, below the knights there were only the serfs who tilled the soil.

The word *serf* comes from a Latin verb meaning *to serve*. Although the class of serfs was continually augmented from those who sank from freedom to servility, it doubtless embraced in the first place those who had been slaves. After the barbaric invasions the earlier social distinctions largely disappeared. Even the conquerors were rough and illiterate. Instead of being founded upon culture or wealth, society came to be organized on a military basis. At the top was the king, presumably the bravest of them all; grouped around him were trusted warriors who were his companions in peace and war. Beneath them, those who made up the fighting body; finally the lowest social stratum was formed of serfs who belonged to the land and remained with it, regardless of change in ownership. Their condition was considerably better than that of Roman slaves; they could neither be bought and sold nor separated from their families.

Thus we may observe two wholly different processes by which land tended to become the property of a few owners while many possessed certain rights in it. The first method is believed to have been an outgrowth of the early Roman relation of client and patron; the second, a development of the German *comitatus*. In either case feudalism resulted, a *system of land tenure* wherein *protection* was pledged on one side, *service* on the other.

History proves that under certain political conditions countries tend to develop feudalism. In Egypt during the Middle Kingdom the central government weakened until it ceased to exist longer in fact, although surviving in theory. Feudal princes entrenched themselves in the *nomes* and

exercised powers previously wielded only by pharaohs. Japan emerged from a state of feudalism at no far distant time. Even now, were the central government of modern nations to be overthrown, local authority might easily replace national authority and something akin to feudalism arise.

The difficulty of understanding feudal Europe is that the system did not develop in any such regular and orderly way as explanations of it would lead one to suppose. Sometimes royal grants to nobles were divided by them among their vassals and so on down to the serfs who belonged to the soil. Sometimes lack of good roads and pressure of more important matters prevented a king from giving attention to distant regions. In lieu of any exercised authority, someone would raise a fortification and in times of danger provide shelter for those who sought his protection or for people of the vicinity whom he could compel to obey him by strength of arms. Finally, when attention was directed to the self-made baron, time and custom had firmly established his claims. Great variation therefore entered into feudalism, nor did uniformity exist in the rights of the seigneur or the duties of vassals.

The Roman population and those who had been Romanized in the provinces tended to gather into towns; the Germanic peoples, being unaccustomed to cities, generally occupied rural districts. As time went on the cities frequently obtained charters which set them free from outside interference, while the country regions remained bound by feudal ties.

Feudalism became one of the dominant institutions of the Middle Ages. It gave rise to knighthood, to chivalry and to the numerous ruined castles which confront the tourist today in the byways of Europe. It is unnecessary to follow its many varieties. A typical case might be something like this: a king would retain a portion of his newly won land, dividing the remainder into unequal parts and giving them as fiefs to his nobles. These in turn could subgrant their portions to vassals who pledged themselves to muster a given number of soldiers to fight when needed; again and again these holdings might be redivided, until

finally knights holding small areas and responsible for a few fighting men or even for themselves alone had none beneath them save the serfs who cultivated the soil.

Under the weak kings of France it became customary in times of war for nobles to ride forth, each followed by his retainers. Incentive was thus given to make as impressive a display as possible. So powerful did the nobles become, and so correspondingly hampered were the rulers, that kings often found themselves obliged to grant monopolies on certain articles, rights to tolls on roads and bridges and countless other privileges to these haughty lords in order to get their aid in mustering an army.

Feudalism was characterized by a weak central government and strong local governments. In the ninth century the strongholds of the lords were built merely of wood. The times were so precarious that it seemed useless to expend any great amount of time and care building structures which might be soon demolished. Later, castles of stone replaced these wooden affairs, few of which have survived. With its strong stone walls and outside moat filled with water, to prevent engines of war being brought up to the wall, the castle became well-nigh impregnable against attacks until general use of gunpowder. Long sieges were necessary to starve out resisting barons. These were costly and might prove futile. Consequently the country became dotted over with great castles and baronial halls, whose owners sometimes wielded as much authority as kings.

Certain words are inseparately connected with feudalism. In France the lord was known as the seigneur; in Germany, as a baron. He was vassal of the king, who gave him protection and whom he was bound to defend with his life. Beneath him were lesser lords, his vassals, at the same time the over-lords of those beneath them. The *villa* of the Romans survived in the *village* which clustered around the castle, and the freemen were known as *villeins* or men of the village.

The early relations of vassal to his lord were simple. Custom regulated the task which the villeins were expected to perform. Generally they paid part of their produce to the seigneur; worked for him so many days each year;

paid toll for use of roads and bridges; had to give so much of their wine for having it made in his press; so much of their bread for baking it in his oven; and in various other ways shared all results of their labor with him; he in turn gave them protection.

By the very nature of the system abuses were bound to creep in. Each lord administered justice on his estate as though he were an absolute ruler. Part of the fees inflicted for misdoing and crime went into his purse; part was supposed to find its way to the royal coffers. In extremity the king might grant immunities to favored nobles; that meant exemption from the inspection of royal officers. It might even mean exemption from all taxation.

In the end the feudal system, which was a natural outgrowth of chaotic conditions following the downfall of Rome and the Germanic invasions, gave way before rising governments that grew strong enough to centralize power which had long been widely diffused. Feudal protection was better than none; better still was to prove government administered in the interest of the people as a whole rather than favorable to a privileged few.

AFTER CHARLEMAGNE

FRENCH occupation of the Ruhr in recent years has once more called attention of the world to an old European quarrel which dates back to the division of the unwieldy empire brought into being by Charlemagne. Since its partition among his grandsons, Louis, Charles and Lothair, the fertile lands west of the Rhine, coveted by both France and Germany, have caused sufficient controversy to endanger the peace of Europe on several occasions.

The Carolingian kings treated the country over which they ruled as a family estate to be shared equally by their heirs. Although Charlemagne had three sons, one only survived him: Louis the Pious, unfitted to govern at any time and utterly incompetent to hold intact a wide and turbulent empire. During his lifetime his quarrelsome sons contended for their territorial rights and after his death they gave slight heed to such disposition of the country as he had made but became embroiled in a struggle that was finally fought out at the battle of Fontenay in 841. So desperate was the fighting that ballads sang of it in this wise: "May that day be accursed! May it no more be counted in the return of the year, but let it be effaced from all remembrance! . . . Never was there worse slaughter; Christians fell in seas of blood. . . . The linen vestments of the dead whitened all the field like birds of autumn." The Treaty of Verdun, 843, finally decreed the following disposition of the empire: territory west of the Rhine, embracing what is now Germany, fell to Louis the German; this was then called the East Frankish kingdom. Charles the Bold received what is now France and part of Belgium. A long narrow strip, including about two-thirds of Italy and reaching to the North Sea was assigned to Lothair, who possessed also the imperial title. Out of this somewhat indefinite middle area, lacking such natural boundaries as mountains or

oceans, Switzerland, Holland, Savoy, part of Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine have since been carved. Lothair's possession is recorded in the very word Lorraine, which is derived from his name and was formerly called Lotharingia. Later France corresponded to the West Frankish state; these two, the Eastern and Western Frankish kingdoms, were soon to be rivals for what temporarily formed a third division.

The Treaty of Verdun has been characterized by Adams as "a re-arrangement of territories which has probably had more influence on later times than any other ever made."¹

None of his descendants inherited Charlemagne's genius for controlling men. Within a century there were no longer any of them left to rule. In absence of a strong central authority, the feudal lords increased and their influence grew apace. Conditions became similar to those prevailing before the establishment of the Carolingians, when Merovingian kings governed, "first among equals," in practise, if not in theory.

Not until the time of Otto the Great was the empire revived, France by this time being independent of it. The linking together of Germany and Italy under the title *Holy Roman Empire of the Germans*, was unhappy for both countries. In the first place, Germany was itself composed of four or five duchies, according to whether or not Lorraine happened for the time to be in possession of France or Germany. Saxony in the north, Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia, with Lorraine were ruled by dukes; each duchy was divided into counties wherein local government was administered by counts. The German king in absence of a direct heir was elected by the great dukes; even so, it often happened that but two or three supported him and the others must needs be overcome in battle before their allegiance could be gained. In a country so disunited, it was highly desirable that the king remain at home and by eternal vigilance check the growing power of the barons. Instead, in order to make good his claim of *empire*, king after king felt obliged to devote his revenues and armies to reducing Italy to accept his sovereignty unwillingly. In Italy, on the other hand, foreign rule prevented the spirit

of nationality from asserting itself. Those favoring Italian independence found leadership in the papacy. Thus confusion and disruption made it possible for feudal lords to prey upon one another and hold the common people in subjection, often in terror.

During the reign of Otto the Great the barons were held in control and the church remained subject to his authority; his son, Otto II, was less successful; his grandson, Otto III, was but a babe when death removed his father. During his minority the kingdom was under a regency which proved ineffectual in controlling the nobles. Crowned when sixteen, Otto III, was influenced by his mother, an Italian princess, and his teacher, the monk Gerbert, to make Italy his abode. He established his capital in Rome, and Germany received so little of his attention that the power of the great dukes steadily increased. With his death both his line and the prestige of Saxony ended. Henry II, duke of Bavaria, was chosen king and, having fought his way to Rome, was crowned emperor by Pope Benedict VIII in 1014.

The Carolingians had treated church offices as if they were secular positions, appointing bishops and abbots much as ministers of state were chosen. Moreover, they often controlled the choice of pope as well and after their line was succeeded by kings elected by the dukes, the same custom was often followed. The result was that the moral tone of the church deteriorated. No longer was celibacy enforced among the clergy; corruption in monasteries, among the priesthood and in the church organization generally became the rule rather than the exception. Men wholly unsuited for religious service often bought their way to bishoprics and archbishoprics, desiring to derive the large revenues that attached to such positions. It was natural, therefore, that earnest men, who held the welfare of the church in highest regard, were fired with a zeal to purify the whole system and restore the clergy to those wholesome conditions that had formerly prevailed.

It is not easy for the modern reader to understand the mediæval point of view because there is no longer confusion between church and state. Then the social body was ruled in political matters by the emperor and in religious affairs

by the church. Moreover, Carolingian kings had often bestowed feudal grants upon bishops and archbishops. Charlemagne had decreed that the people should pay a tithe to the church, which was also the recipient of gifts of land, and the result was that a goodly portion of the realm, perhaps one-third, was administered by churchmen. Consequently bishops and archbishops not merely filled important positions in the church but were at the same time vassals of the emperor, rendering him service and often serving in secular capacities. The situation confronting papal reformers was difficult, for it necessitated the ascendancy of church over state if they were to control appointments to ecclesiastical positions.

The restoration of a celibate clergy was accomplished when the papacy proclaimed to Christians throughout the world that sacraments administered by married priests were invalid; the people were unwilling thenceforth to support self-indulgent priests and this was overcome in the main. Simony, the purchase of church position by money, was also lessened. The election of the pope by cardinals, appointees of the papacy, was finally secured. Yet the *investiture* struggle waged for a century and finally ended in a compromise.

When church dignitaries were instated in office the ceremony was called an *investiture*, they being *invested* with the symbols of their positions, the ring and staff. Thus duly ordained, they could draw the revenues from their benefices and perform duties devolving upon them. The rivalry between emperor and papacy for the privilege of so investing churchmen led to results both unseemly and unchristian. Henry IV became involved in such a struggle in the eleventh century when the monk Hildebrand, now Pope Gregory VII, was putting many much needed reforms into execution.

“Inasmuch as we have learned that, contrary to the establishment of the holy fathers, investiture with churches is, in many places, performed by lay persons; and that from this cause many disturbances arise in the church by which the Christian religion is trodden under foot: We decree that no one of the clergy shall receive investiture with a

bishopric or abbey or church from the hand of the emperor or king or of any lay person, male or female. But if he shall presume to do so he shall clearly know that such investiture is bereft of apostolic authority, and that he himself should lie under excommunication until fitting satisfaction shall have been rendered." In such words did popes set forth their position on investiture and when kings defied them, they excommunicated them; whereupon emperors would declare the papacy vacant and proceed to have a new pope chosen. When Henry IV followed such procedure, it so happened that the German dukes were already dissatisfied with him and welcomed the pope's decree to the effect that they were absolved from further allegiance to him. Finding himself thus between two fires, the king started out to overtake the pope who was even then setting forth for a conference with the German barons. For three days at Canossa Henry, clad in a coarse robe as a penitent, waited before the pope would receive him and remove the ban of excommunication. The spectacle of a powerful ruler doing penance for having given offense made such an impression on the minds of men that historians thenceforward have been led to give it more attention than it deserved. Ever since when anyone has been forced to undergo deep humiliation, it has been said that he *has been to Canossa*.

At last, at the Concordat of Worms, it was settled that the church should bestow the ring and staff and the emperor should grant the benefice, either being in person present at the election to guard against the choice of those who might prove detrimental to his policy or sending his representative.

Some time elapsed in France after the end of the Carolingian dynasty before a permanent line was once more established by the coronation of Hugh Capet. The Capetians were so-called because of a nickname given Hugh on account of a peculiar cape he wore. With the capriciousness of epithets, the word persisted. The early Capetians were not aggressive rulers. The situation here was not unlike that in Germany so far as a firmly established feudal system was concerned. The king of France was dependent

upon the lords for mustering an army and often possessed less authority than many of his nobles.

The prevailing conditions in Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries favored the growth of feudalism. As we have just seen, the empire as a political force was ineffectual; after Charlemagne, it disappeared altogether for a hundred and fifty years. The castles of nobles frequently supplied the only protection available when Saracens invaded the land or Vikings ravaged the coasts, or when the Magyars of Hungary assailed their neighbors. After the Saracens and Hungarians had been subdued, the Norsemen still continued their depredations. Centralized government failing, the people of each community turned to such feudal lords as were sufficiently strong and fearless to combat the foe. Villages grew up under their protection and whole districts acknowledged their authority. Even when emperors were aggressive, they were often too absorbed with enemies in Italy or subduing the Magyars to aid outlying regions, while the barbarous old Norsemen burned and pillaged, escaping with their ill-gotten spoils to the safety of the high seas before soliders could be brought against them.

Ancestors of the present Swedes, Danes and Norwegians, the Norsemen offer an interesting field to the historian. Due to late overcrowding in the Scandinavian peninsula, they began their raids after other Teutonic tribes had settled in southwestern Europe and become Christianized. Clinging tenaciously to their old pagan gods, they did not spare churches, monasteries and other religious institutions. Instead, they sought them out because of the treasure they offered, with their costly candlesticks and other appurtenances of worship. Their ships painted the color of the sea, they could slip along the shores unobserved; equipped with oars as well as sails, their boats accommodating fifty or sixty men, these marauders sometimes destroyed entire tracts and escaped before forces could gather to combat them. Some of them pressed into Russia, some pillaged England and France. Under their famous leader, Rollo, Norse invaders pushed into France until they reached Paris, which they besieged for months. The gallant Robert encouraged the people to hold out against them and

when Paris emerged victorious, it became the bulwark of the kingdom. At last the invaders were ceded lands around the lower Seine, and the province they settled is still known as Normandy. Here Duke William became strong enough to negotiate with Edward the Confessor regarding the English crown. When it was afterwards bestowed upon Harold, William invaded England with numerous followers, who welcomed the adventure the expedition offered. Having killed Harold, William became king in 1066.

Although at first ruthless destroyers, the Normans later became excellent rulers and administrators, evincing wonderful adaptability. They accommodated themselves to the people among whom they settled, whether in England, France, Russia or Sicily. They invaded Greenland and Iceland and some of their adventurers sighted the eastern coast of North America long before the time of Columbus, although Europe was not yet ready to profit by the discovery.

¹ Adams: *Civilization During the Middle Ages*, p. 170.

THE EASTERN EMPIRE

IT will be remembered that Byzantium was colonized by the Hellenes^x at an early time, so that when in 326 A. D. Constantine determined upon this site for his new capital, the town had already existed for a thousand years. Its superb location had attracted the early Greek traders and appealed now to the Roman emperor because of its easy defense. Surrounded on three sides by a narrow channel which could be protected against aggressors, only on the west was access possible by land. The peninsula on which the settlement had grown up is the southeastern extremity of Europe, near Asia and convenient to Africa. As the port has deep water, sea-going vessels can come directly to its wharves to unload their cargoes. Having direct waterways to many trading points, the harbor has been commercially important from remote times.

Four years were spent in constructing new buildings to accommodate the emperor and his court, and to house the various branches of government. In the spring of 330 A. D. the new capital was dedicated under its present name: Constantinople. The senate was left in charge of affairs in Rome and another such body organized in Constantinople; here also other Roman institutions were duplicated. Even the "Blues" and the "Greens," the great factions of the hippodrome, found a place in the new capital where they gained a political influence exceeding that held previously by them in Rome. Workmen flocked in great numbers to the city where extensive building activities offered employment, and around the emperor's court men of letters and artists soon congregated.

Although the withdrawal of the emperor brought inevitable changes to Rome, no apparent division of the empire was noticeable until 395, when Theodosius, dying, left his two sons to rule, Arcadius in the East, Honorius in the

West. The first was eighteen years of age, the other, ten. Both were controlled by their ministers. Although it was not clear at the time that the death of Theodosius had precipitated a division, this did in fact date from the ascension of his sons, although the fiction of a united empire lasted nearly a century longer. In 408 Theodosius II, a boy of seven, succeeded Arcadius. His sister, Pulcheria, administered the government with much efficiency, although it was found necessary to send gifts and sums of money to the Huns to prevent them from invading Roman provinces. Pulcheria married the able general who finally refused gold to them longer; and together these two maintained peace for some time. In 457 Leo the Dacian was set up as emperor by a German general.

The Greeks were prone to argument and to the definition of terms. Hence, while the West was occupied with practical matters, spreading the Christian religion throughout western Europe, fighting for territorial rights and organizing government, in the East disputes waged continually regarding the meanings of words, formulation of creeds and similar questions that seem rather far-fetched as we read about them today. Yet those who voiced the queries were generally sincere, anxious to get the new faith so exactly stated that heresies might be readily discernible. The ever-present query during the fourth and fifth centuries had been the relation of God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: *precisely how were they related, one to another*. Hostile factions resulted; rivalries among the different church sees fanned animosities to great heat. The sixth century found them divided as to the *nature of Christ*—the earlier question having been largely disposed of.

Justin, an Illyrian peasant, having risen in the army to first rank, made himself emperor in 518. He was able to settle much of the religious trouble that had kept the East in turmoil. At his death in 527 the great Justinian succeeded, to rule with a strong hand until 565. It is realized by scholars today that without the good work of his predecessors it would have been impossible for him to have succeeded in his many accomplishments. *Unity* was the keynote to his ambitions: *One state, one church, one law*.

Africa was won back, then Italy; questions pertaining to religion were settled; the monumental tasks of codifying the laws, abstracting cases for the Digest and preparing a text-book, the Institutes, were done at his direction. These laid the foundation for later jurisprudence. Justinian was a builder and a tireless organizer. His work was highly important, but he left the treasury empty and the country exhausted by heavy taxes imposed to provide the large revenues demanded by his undertakings. Justin II, his successor from 565-578, was misguided enough to provoke a war with Persia, the great rival of the Roman empire for Asiatic provinces. The Lombards took advantage of this disturbance in the East to invade Italy. Heraclius who reigned from 610-641 was able to reduce Persia's forces and make her willing to sue for peace. For his success in conducting this brilliant military campaign he was hailed the *New Scipio*.

It was in the seventh century that the Arabs began their conquests, winning converts for Mahomet by the sword when more peaceful methods failed. The Eastern Empire had been weakened by the Persian war and dissensions at home. During the time of Justinian II it seemed to be on the very verge of ruin. Then, manifesting those powers of recuperation and permanency that so often surprise the student of its history, under Leo the Isaurian, 717-741, Constantinople came triumphantly through a siege of several months; the empire was reorganized and commerce restored.

The Isaurians were mountaineers who dwelt north of Mount Taurus. They lived by plundering the territories of their neighbors. Finally, in the fourth century, their one city, Isaura, was burned by them rather than let it fall into the hands of their besiegers. Thereafter they were lost as a tribe, being absorbed by different peoples of Asia Minor. That one of such antecedents should have become emperor in Constantinople is not strange, in view of the fact that succession to the throne was not fixed; whoever was able to wield greatest power might aspire to the purple.

Justinian the Great was the last emperor to speak Latin; Greek was spoken by the people generally and now became

the language of the court, as it was the medium of the Eastern church and of learning. A somewhat fanatical attitude was often manifested in the West toward pagan literature. No such prejudice developed in the East, which remained friendly to classical learning. Thus the Byzantine empire became a storehouse for the past and in this respect merits the gratitude of people generally for having preserved priceless manuscripts that would otherwise have been totally lost.

The religious trouble of the eighth century centered around the *icons* or images of Christ and the saints, use of which in the East had become perverted. Superstition was rife and the masses now worshipped the statues and paintings to a degree approaching idolatry. Leo the Isaurian determined to reform this abuse, and the aggressive methods of his followers led to a schism. It is doubtful whether the situation was adequately understood in Rome and the West, where conditions were racially different. To understand the extent of the abuse in the East the following lines from Finlay, the well-known historian of the Eastern Empire, are helpful:

“In his Iconoclast opinions, Leo is merely a type of the more enlightened laymen of his age. A strong reaction against the superstitions introduced into the Christian religion by the increasing ignorance of the people, pervaded the educated classes, who were anxious to put a stop to what might be considered a revival of the ideas and feelings of paganism. The Asiatic Christians, who were brought into frequent collision with the followers of Mahomet, Zoroaster, and Moses, were compelled to observe that the worship of the common people among themselves was sensual, when compared with the devotion of the infidels. The worship of God was neglected, and his service transferred to some human symbol. The favorite saint was usually one whose faults were found to bear some analogy to the vices of his worshipper, and thus pardon was supposed to be obtained for sin on easier terms than accords with Divine justice, and vice was consequently rendered more prevalent. The clergy had yielded to the popular ignorance; the walls of the church were covered with

pictures which were reported to have wrought miraculous cures; their shrines were enriched by paintings not made with hands; the superstitions of the people were increased, and the doctrines of Christianity were neglected. . . . Leo commenced his ecclesiastical reforms in the year 726, by an edict ordering all pictures in churches to be placed so high as to prevent the people from kissing them and prohibiting prostration before these symbols, or any act of public worship being addressed to them. Against this moderate edict of the emperor, the Patriarch Germanos and the Pope Gregory II made strong opposition.”¹

And again, speaking of the same aversion to such idolatry on the part of the educated, he says: “To them the reverence paid by the ignorant to images said to have fallen from heaven, to pictures painted by St. Luke, to virgins who wept, and to saints who supplied the lamps burning before their effigies with a perpetual fountain of oil, appeared rank idolatry.”²

Those who welcomed the sanction of the emperor for destroying the icons, so earning the name of *Iconoclasts*, or image-breakers, incurred the undying hatred of the ignorant who regarded such destruction as sure to invoke divine wrath. The pestilence that raged somewhat later, a volcanic eruption at sea and other catastrophes were interpreted as sent to punish men for their presumption.

The contest between the two parties, one favoring icons and the other opposed to them, was further embittered by the attachment of political significance to a religious question. Indeed, there were those who thought that the emperor only made this an issue for political reasons. Certain it is that for a hundred years the hostilities that accompanied this fiercely debated question reached into Europe and tended in no small degree to bring about the final separation between the two churches: that of the West, with Rome as its center and the Pope as its head, using Latin as the language of its service; and the church of the East, having its center in Constantinople, with the Patriarch its head, though always subservient to the emperor; its service conducted in Greek with worshippers

much nearer the spirit of the past than Christians in the West.

The Western empire, centering in Rome, lasted about one hundred years after the accession of Honorius in 395; with the establishment of the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy it came to an end. It is true that Justinian regained it but only during his lifetime was it held for the empire.

In 775 Leo IV, a child of nine years, ascended to the throne. During his minority his mother, the infamous Irene, acted as regent. Afterwards, intoxicated with an ambition to rule alone, she commanded her son to be blinded and set aside. Such was the situation in the East on Christmas Day in 800 when the Pope crowned Charlemagne Roman emperor; that the Frankish king found himself placed in an embarrassing position by such an act there can be no doubt. It is claimed that negotiations were even set afoot to negotiate a marriage between Charlemagne and Irene when word came that the latter had been deposed.

The Byzantine empire survived until 1453, when it yielded before the onslaughts of the Seljuk Turks. During the early Middle Ages it preserved ancient learning until the West was ready to receive it and served as a buffer against the inroads of enemies who often exhausted their strength before its walls, thus saving Europe from attack. Particularly were the Saracens repulsed so decisively that danger from them came to Europe from Spain rather than the East. It is more and more becoming known how great is the debt of modern Europe to Byzantium which stood as a bulwark against the eastern aggressors, and fostered art and learning for future generations.

¹ Finlay: *History of Byzantine Empire*, p. 34.

² Ibid., p. 56.

³ For Hellenes see first year.

THE PRIMACY OF ROME

WHY Rome rather than any one of a dozen other villages became leader of ancient Italy, is a query often debated. Similarly, the student of the Middle Ages may wonder how it came about that, a thousand years later, Rome became head of the Christian world. Pressing the question farther, it might be asked: how came it that Christianity, based on the teachings of Christ, so simple and easy of understanding, should bring into existence such a complex system of organization within a few centuries of its foundation.

The answer to the last query is to be found in the fact that Christianity came to Rome in its formative period. Athens was the home of philosophy and dialectics; Socrates' oft-repeated plea: "Let us follow the argument wheresoever it leadeth" survived; terms must be explained, statements harmonized. Rome was the home of law and government; not merely to conquer lands but always to *organize* them had been the task of the Romans. Brought early to the capital, Christianity found its first converts among the humble; when it permeated the upper classes, and especially after it became the state religion, it became Latinized.

Several dangers confronted the new faith in its early existence as the officially acknowledged religion of the empire. One was that it might grow to be so completely a part of the state that it would be reduced to formulæ, ceremonies, and ultimately crystallize into something as lifeless as the old religions had been—a mere adjunct of government and no longer vital to the people as a whole. Another was that it might become the possession of a body of initiates rather than the world at large; again, rent by factions, hostile and unrelenting, it seemed at times that the

whole body of Christians might split into groups, ineffectual because so bitterly divided.

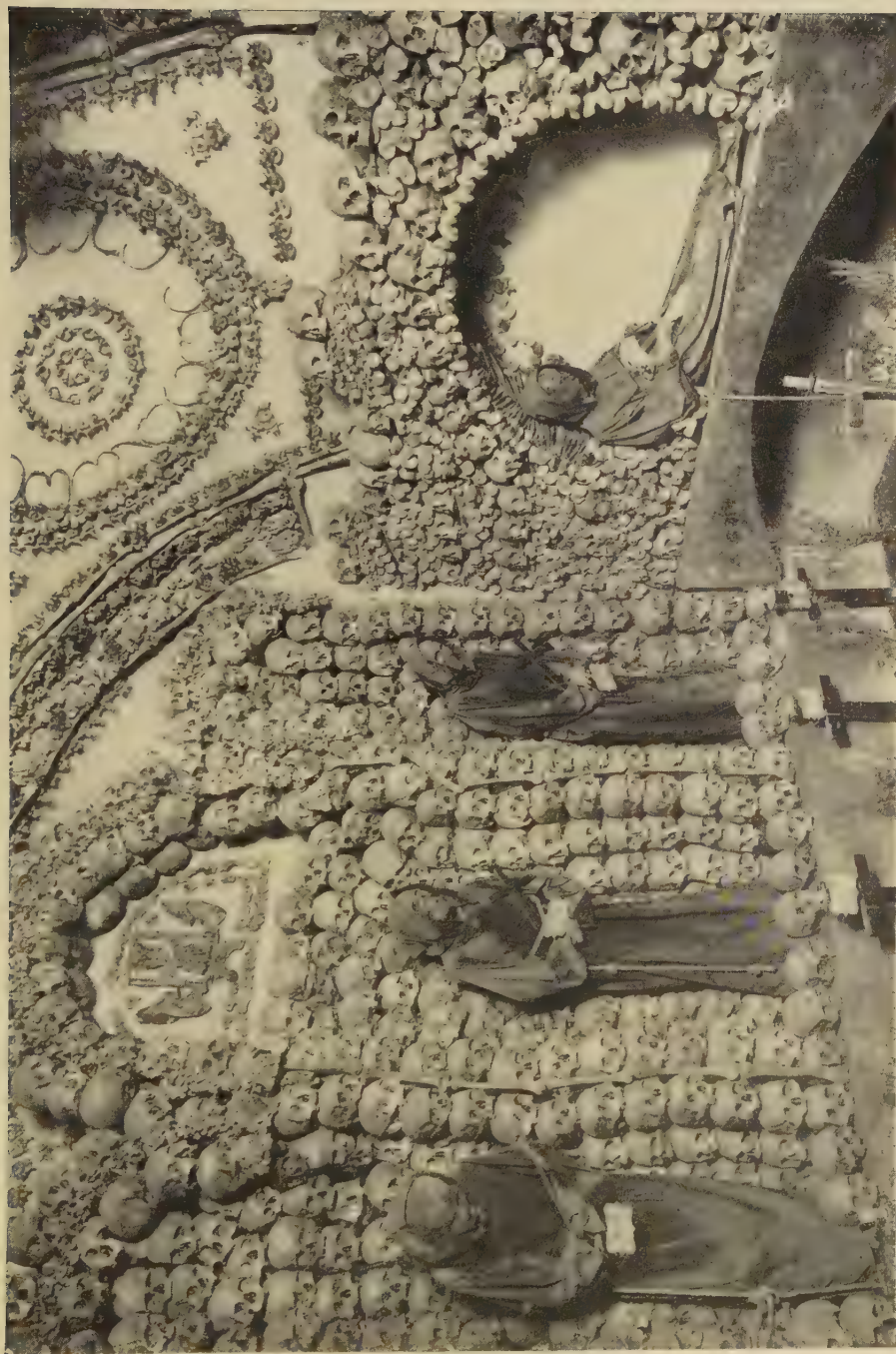
The main reason why these dangers were averted is to be found in the strong organization which developed in the church itself.

Originally each great city constituted a bishopric, its bishop or head supervising congregations in the country round about. At one time the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch were as important as the bishop of Rome; none had other than local influence. However, the church in Rome soon became the largest and wealthiest in the West. Christians dying would bequeath their property or portions of it to the church. Those who lived in the perilous periods of barbarous invasions found that possessions of today were often gone tomorrow and in some cases turned their substance to the use of the bishop, to be expended in providing for the poor, for defense, or other worthy purposes. In these years, all bishops were called *papa*, or father, bishop. Indeed, not until the age of Gregory VII was the term restricted to the bishop of Rome, whence comes the word *pope*.

After the removal of the emperor to Constantinople the senate led but a shadowy existence. When Teutonic invaders stood before the walls of Rome in the fifth century it fell to Leo I to dissuade Attila the Hun from destroying the ancient capital; and when in 455 the Vandals followed, the same venerable bishop induced them to spare the lives of the inhabitants.

The so-called Petrine theory which has given occasion to endless argument in the past is based on a sentence in the Gospel according to Matthew, which reads: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."¹

Other Gospels do not repeat this and to discuss the authenticity of the sentence leads into comparison of old manuscripts of the Gospels. Hence it is more profitable for us to note the evident reasons, found in history itself, that led to the exaltation of the bishop of Rome to the head of the Catholic or Universal Church. The first of these was



"MEMENTO MORI"
Ossuary in the Capucian church at Rome.

the prestige of Rome itself. It had long been the centre of the civilized world, and was still the most important city in the West. Consequently its bishop became preëminent among western bishops when they convened in numerous church councils. Secondly, with the removal of the emperor to the East, no one else was left in Rome with as much influence as the bishop. In times of danger the people instinctively turned to him and he never failed them.

With the establishment of the Ostrogoths in Italy the peninsula was largely lost to the empire despite the acknowledgment of Theodoric that he ruled as a vassal of the emperor. During this period the preëminence of the bishop in Rome became more and more recognized. When, under the government of Justinian, Italy was again recovered, the bishop's authority was temporarily lessened, only to rise again at the invasion of the Lombards. In vain the emperor was implored to protect his Italian subjects; the Saracens were threatening Constantinople and the eastern provinces; consequently Italy was left to defend itself.

So it naturally came about that the bishop of Rome looked elsewhere for support, finding it at last in the king of the Franks. Pippin came to the succor of the pope and, as we have seen, Charlemagne repulsed the Lombards and himself became their ruler, bestowing upon the pope certain districts which he conquered, as Pippin had done before him.

Because of these land grants and others of lesser importance which had been made by private individuals, not alone in Italy, but in Gaul, Sicily and even in Africa, not only was the pope bishop of Rome and head of the Christian church, but proprietor of landed estates.

The first conscious effort of Roman bishops to exalt their position to one of authority was probably the attempt of Victor I to compel Eastern bishops to accept the date determined by him as proper for the observance of Easter. When they refused to abide by his decision he excommunicated them. However, even this action did not lead them to acquiesce, and, as a matter of fact, Rome was never able to impress herself upon the East as she did upon the West. An early council in the East decreed that the see of Con-

stantinople was equal in power to that of Rome and though Rome failed to acknowledge this, it nevertheless prevailed in the Greek world. Gregory I lost no opportunity to announce the superiority of Rome and in the fifth century a pope had said: "Two powers govern the world, the priestly and the kingly. The first is assuredly the superior, for the priest is responsible to God for the conduct of even the emperors themselves."

The tradition that Peter had been the first bishop of Rome, that he and Paul had been martyred there, that to Peter's successors the authority vested in him had descended, tended of course to augment the authority of the papacy. Yet it is plain that events gave repeated force to the theory of supremacy. The cleavage discernible from the time of Constantine between East and West, growing clearer with the divided rule in 395 when one king dwelt in Rome, the other in Constantinople; the trend of the western mind, activity absorbing men to the exclusion of long arguments, making them willing to accept the statement of the church that the mysteries of religion were to be accepted by faith, not demonstrated by argument; the East, temperamentally given over to formulating creeds and articles of belief and to ceremonies—the very situation tended to bring the bishop of Rome into a position of influence and importance.

When the empire was revived in the West, German now, though still called *Roman*, conquest and religion went hand in hand and, in the case of Charlemagne at least, the two were undivided. For a while the organizations of state and church worked side by side. Finally the struggle for ascendancy between emperor and pope absorbed to a considerable degree the attention of Europe.

It is idle to speculate on what would have been the result had events occurred other than they did but one can scarcely forbear wondering whether, if Christianity had not come to Rome in its impressionable years, it would have developed as strong an organization as it did. With their predilection for systematizing and organizing, it seems as though the Romans fell upon this new field before them with the same energy that they had previously exerted in organizing newly acquired provinces. In view of the tremendous part Chris-

tianity was destined to play in Europe, it is plain that machinery would be necessary for carrying on prodigious missionary enterprises, for the establishment of religious orders, the planting of churches and fostering learning during centuries so tumultuous and discordant that it is impossible to imagine what would have been the result without the guidance of a universal church.

¹Matthew, Vol. XVI, p. 18.

EARLY BRITAIN

SCIENTIFIC investigation in recent years has led to the opinion that during the Rough Stone or Paleolithic age in England, what is now an island was still a part of Europe, as was also Ireland. Human life of that remote age is the concern of archæologist and antiquarian. During the Neolithic period the separation had taken place and the coast line, while not exactly as today, was in the main similar. Who the earliest inhabitants of this age were or whence they came are disputed questions. Later the Celts,^z who, it will be remembered, were at one period the dominant race in central Europe, invaded the island. They intermarried with the natives and, as several invasions from the mainland took place, the populations of different parts of Britain became unlike; in the western part the natives remained less affected by Celtic influence; in the south and east it predominated. All were divided into small tribes, their chieftains often at war with one another. In what is now Scotland dwelt the Picts and Caledonians, fierce plundering Highlanders.

In 55 B. C. Julius Cæsar led an invasion into Britain, largely for the purpose of learning definitely regarding the island, it is now supposed, since the effort involved would outweigh any commercial advantage. It was late in the fall when he crossed and because he found it impossible to land his cavalry, the undertaking was postponed until the following year, when he took thither a considerable number of infantry and horse for an exploring campaign. The tribes in the extreme south were not hostile but pressing inland he was soon forced to offer battle. He took hostages and imposed tribute upon the people, but beyond that there was no perceptible gain for Rome.

In 43 A. D. Claudius sent an expedition into Britain, Vespasian and his son Titus being in command. Later

Claudius went in person to investigate the situation, giving occasion for the triumph that graced his return to Rome. However, the conquest of the island lies to the credit of Agricola, the able general who, during the reign of Domitian, pushed north to what is now Scotland. Here he threw up earthworks and stationed a chain of garrisons along the thirty-five miles which terminates on one side of the island in the Firth of Forth and on the other in Clyde. Incessant raids from the north led Hadrian afterwards to accept a more southern boundary. He constructed a stone wall seventy miles in length from Solway to Tyne. In front of the wall was a ditch some thirty feet in width, look-outs on the top of the rampart enabling the soldiers quartered there to apprehend invaders. In 142 A. D., during the reign of Antoninus Pius, the Antonine wall was built where Agricola in 77 A. D. had marked the northern frontier. Commodus, Septimus Severus, and Constantius were all at different times in Britain. A war, waged against the turbulent Caledonians for two years by Severus, resulted in the loss of about 50,000 Roman soldiers. Although no regular battles were fought, guerilla warfare continued with the northern tribes.

From the time of Claudius, Britain was held as a Roman province until the withdrawal of the legions in 407, when the government at home was beset by danger from invading Teutons.

The Romans found the Britons considerably advanced from barbarism. They tilled the soil, had flocks and herds, lived in villages in rude huts, wove linen and wool, made a crude pottery. They worshipped gods of nature and the Druid priesthood was held in deep veneration. Tribes in the south and east assimilated Roman civilization readily, while those who clung tenaciously to the past penetrated farther west. Taking refuge in the more inaccessible hills, they were less affected by Roman influences. With their unflinching habit, the Romans changed the old trackways into highways that have in some places endured to the present time. Towns sprang up and in them appeared those invariable adjuncts of Roman life: forums, basilicas, baths, places of amusement, and comfortable dwellings.

Wherever Roman soldiers were permanently stationed, traders and merchantmen followed to profit by supplying their needs. So it came about that settlers migrated to the island, and the southeastern portion at least was Romanized to a considerable degree. It was the policy of Rome to police her provinces, leaving the people free to go about their regular occupations unburdened by the responsibility of defense. By so doing the danger of revolts was minimized. It developed, for this reason, that when the Roman soldiery withdrew to Italy, the Britons, who for two or three hundred years had been under the dominance of Rome, were unable to protect themselves against attacks that had never wholly ceased and which were renewed with vigor as quickly as the legions departed. So, in a few years, many evidences of Roman civilization were obliterated. Invaders came from north and west, eager to reclaim districts which their ancestors had once held; but even greater was the menace from the northwestern part of Europe. Angles, Saxons and Jutes swooped down upon the defenseless shores of the island, destroying the people and burning their settlements. For years these raids were mere plundering excursions; then in 449 the first settlement was planted. For the next four hundred years the Saxons proved strongest of these Norsemen, who appropriated the the island for themselves. The Angles took the northeastern part; the East, South and West Saxons may still be traced in the words Sussex, Essex and Wessex—the districts that they first occupied. On the Isle of Wight, in Kent, and along a portion of the southern coast, the Jutes settled.

Christianity had been taken to Britain by the soldiers during Roman occupation; nevertheless, after the withdrawal of the legions the people lapsed into their earlier polytheism. Now it was carried from Rome by missionaries who made many converts among the Saxons, baptizing the king and his followers. The West Saxons gained the upper hand and, while the island was by no means united, nevertheless under Egbert, who had spent some time at the court of Charlemagne and imbibed many European ideas, treaties

were made with other tribes and peace and order established.

In the early ninth century the Danes began to harry the coast; they burned the villages, put the inhabitants to death and carried away as spoils all treasure they could lay hands upon. They began to settle along the east. Unlike the Saxons, who cared little for trade and concerned themselves with agriculture when not fighting, the Danes were traders. Alfred the Great is remembered as having stayed the inroad of the Danes, held them within certain prescribed boundaries and instituted organization and system, so that peace and prosperity came at last to England.

The Angles—or Engles—were the first of these Teutonic invaders to develop writing and their name is perpetuated in the word *England* (from Angle land) and *English*. Alfred, a Saxon, had spent considerable time in Italy where the attributes of advanced civilization had strongly impressed him. When not fighting to protect his people he was occupied in trying to educate and civilize them. His efforts in the cause of learning may well be compared with those of Charlemagne, while his own education was sufficient to enable him to write several books. As time went on his descendants were able to bring the Danes under their control.

So far as permanent results of Roman occupation in Britain, aside from the roads and remnants of walls, arched gateways and similar remains, the story of Rome's dominance is perpetuated in geographical names. The camp, as would be expected, was the center of Roman life; by it a little town usually grew up. *Chester* comes from *castra*, camp, as does *cester* in Leicester. *Colonia* is the Latin word for colony; it is preserved in Lincoln and other names that end similarly. Avon, or afon, signifies water. Strata was highway. Thus the significance of Stratford-on-Avon is easily seen. Gloucester is now believed to have originally been Claud-cester, or a Claudian camp.

Saxon supremacy left an indelible stamp on the life and culture and language of England. The story of Beowulf^v originated among the Vikings before they left their continental home. It was one of the epics that they cherished

for centuries after. Bede was the earliest Saxon historian. His *Ecclesiastical History of England* is a valuable source for this early age. The old Saxon Chronicle was prepared from more ancient annals and continued under the instruction of Alfred. Cædmon wrote a *Paraphrase of the Scriptures*. Alfred modernized learning and established schools. His own writings are important.

In the later part of the ninth century a new invasion of Danes found the people unable to repulse them: finally *Danegeld*, or tribute was offered to purchase peace. By 1017 one of their number, Cnut, succeeded in making himself king. Once established, he dismissed many of the warriors who had aided him to place himself upon the throne and proved to be an efficient ruler. Later in the century, Cnut being dead and his house at an end, Edward the Confessor was called to the throne. When it again became vacant, the Norman invasion resulted in the establishment of the Norman rulers upon the English throne.

Roman Britain, Saxon Britain and the period of Danish invasions offer interesting fields for study. Did we know more of Celtic domination in the island, many problems of the historian would be illuminated. The work of King Alfred was highly important and the Christianizing of Britain constitutes a wonderful chapter in Mediæval missionary enterprise. However, for our purpose in tracing the general progress of civilization during the Middle Ages, it is sufficient to note that while the Teutons were invading central and western Europe, their kinsmen were scurrying over the waters, carrying destruction to Britain. As they finally settled in Germany, so too they presently took up a permanent abode in England. Strife raged for awhile among them, each branch eager for territory and ascendancy. By the time of Alfred, the West Saxons had succeeded in gaining the upper hand. Repeated invasions from Denmark required fighting still to be the principal concern of any king who would maintain his position in the land. The Danes finally succeeded in placing one of their chieftains upon the throne. It being customary to exile anyone who might become a claimant for the crown, it came about in course of time that all the families closely related to the royal line

lived so much of the time on the continent that they all alike seemed foreign to the people of England. This was to become a strong factor when William of Normandy attempted to succeed Edward the Confessor. Had Harold been able to command the deep regard of his subjects once held by Alfred, a stranger would have found the subjugation of the island a much more difficult task than it proved. The Norman victory at the battle of Hastings in 1066 settled definitely future succession. For the next century the most vital accomplishment for future England was the amalgamation of Saxon and Norman.

^zSee Chapter on Teutonic Invaders.

^vSee page 181.

EARLY MEDIÆVAL EDUCATION

AMONG the early Christians little interest was directed toward intellectual matters. They looked for the coming of Christ at no far distant time and were absorbed with spiritual concerns. They felt an aversion for the Greek and Roman literature because this made reference or pertained in some degree to old religions, against which they felt very hostile. So for a century and more there was little, if any, attempt to educate their children except in families, where instruction was either of a practical nature, to aid them in earning their living, or regarding Christian beliefs.

As time went on and it became plain that a second earthly coming of Christ was either not to be expected or in any event, not immediately, it was found necessary to instruct those who desired to join the Christian church in its tenets; the more, since persecutions being intermittently decreed, spies sometimes affected an interest in these matters in order to obtain evidence against Christian worshippers. To this end the *Catechumenal* schools gradually came into existence. At first they were probably not given the name of schools; rather, they were classes conducted in the portico or some other part of the church for the instruction of those manifesting a desire to become members. Because the instruction consisted largely in the asking of formal questions and in answers prepared in advance to be memorized by the candidate, the one conducting such a class was called a catechist, or a *questioner* of neophytes or *catechumens*. Our word catechism is seen to be closely allied, *catechumenoi* meaning literally *those caused to hear*. At first the instruction lasted two years; it was later extended to four. Those receiving it were divided into four stages of advancement, from the first who had just expressed a desire to affiliate with the Christian church, to the *electi*, who had

completed the course and were ready to be baptized and receive communion.

While the object of this training was primarily to prepare the child for Christian membership, it was nevertheless essential that he be able to read and write the Scriptures, to memorize texts and to sing the songs of praise. As a result, those receiving the teaching became familiar with these branches. In the home further training was supposed to be given, especially in the matter of conduct becoming to a follower of Christ.

These simple schools were the forerunners of parochial or parish schools, many of which are still conducted in America and other countries.

In course of time discontent was bound to arise because the children of Christians received only elementary teaching. It became apparent that those who were to later teach and preach should be well grounded. Some acquaintance with law was fundamental if only for the drawing of a simple contract; some familiarity with classical writers was desirable if only employed in arguments to refute the pagans. To contend with the adherents of the old beliefs, it was imperative that one be prepared to meet them on their own ground. The disposition toward ancient writings was not uniform among the Fathers. The Eastern churchmen, nearer to Greek thought, were inclined to be more lenient toward Hellenistic learning than were those of the West.

Justin Martyr said in the middle of the second century after Christ: "The teachings of Plato are not alien to those of Christ, though not in all respects similar, for all writers (of antiquity) were able to have a dim vision of realities by means of the in-dwelling seed of the implanted word."

Some of the early Christian Fathers attempted to reconcile certain ancient writers with the teachings of Christ. They are known as *Apologists*. The *Gnostics* likewise gave rise to a still more favorable view of pagan philosophy, producing an eclecticism, neither Christian nor pagan but a blending of the two. This highly intellectual movement was confined to the educated and did not affect the masses. Had it prevailed, it would have made of Christianity something speculative rather than vital. Basil wrote: "Are

we then to give up literature? I do not say that, but I do say we must not kill souls. . . . If you can unite both advantages, do so by all means; but if not, choose the most precious.”

In the West there were those who displayed a spirit intensely hostile to the study of the ancients. In the minds of men holding this attitude, the immorality and social corruption which they had witnessed were associated with the pagan religions, and they dismissed altogether whatever savored of pre-Christian doctrine. Yet the very men who argued most strongly against the classics were often those whose learning was grounded upon them, as for example, St. Augustine, who decried the very knowledge that enabled him to speak so effectively. However, there was no time when the Latin writers were wholly neglected, especially Virgil, who was interpreted as having foretold the advent of Christ. Greek became obsolete and after a few centuries there were almost none in the West who could read it. This was never the case in the East where the language was always spoken by many of the people.

Because of the need of training for churchmen, there grew up in every large city an episcopal or *cathedral* school. The word *episcopos* means *overseer*, or *bishop*. The cathedral was the chair of the bishop and around the cathedral churches, schools were generally found after the edict of Justinian in 529 abolishing all pagan institutions of learning.

With the growth of monasticism, it became necessary to have specific instruction for those who were later to be received into the order. Hence monastic schools were founded. As would be expected, these were more concerned with inculcating religious instruction than with mental discipline. The children were taught to read and write, to sing the songs and to figure a little in order that they might be able to compute the holy days of the church. Roman numerals were rather awkward to manipulate and not until the introduction of Arabic notation was mathematics extensively studied.

The facilities in both the cathedral and monastic schools were meager. In the first place, those who taught were not

as a rule well prepared themselves. The Benedictine monks, following the rule laid down by their founder, set apart two hours daily for study. They collected manuscripts and copied those in their possession, using duplicates for exchange with other institutions that possessed such works as they desired. Much of this copying was done mechanically, the penman not always being able to understand the text he was transcribing but striving to make his characters look like those before him. Whatever trade in books existed at this time was carried on by the monasteries. Materials for book-making were expensive, and manuscripts became much rarer than they had been in Rome when the copying of books by slaves had been conducted as a regular business.

By the sixth or seventh century the Teutons had largely embraced Christianity, and hence there was less occasion to combat the old religions. For this reason the opposition to classical writers tended to diminish. Greater interest was now manifested in increasing the number of manuscripts; a scriptorium became a necessary part of every monastery and additional copy rooms were often provided for the inscribing and illumination of valuable works.

Yet, what may be said regarding the existence of schools in cities, even before the acceptance of Christianity as the state religion, could not be said of Europe as a whole. Cities were few; indeed, even Rome fell to such small population that it is doubtful if there were any cities at all, as we now use the word. Antioch, Cæsarea and other centers in Asia, maintained a large population; Alexandria continued to be a cultural center; Constantinople grew steadily for some time after its being made a capital in 330. But these were all in the East. Western Europe had nothing in point of size to set against them.

“The ages which succeeded the downfall of the Western Empire were marked by tumults and disorders, such as were incident to the breaking up of politics and to the infusion, absorption, and general amelioration of barbarian elements preparatory to the formation of new states. What seemed like final dissolution was only incubation. For ages everything is in a state of flux; new hordes of barbarians hurl themselves upon the partially assimilated and domes-

ticated earlier swarms; kingdoms rise like bubbles and like bubbles burst and disappear; violence prevails; laws are silent; industry languishes; and learning has no encouragement; yet during these times Christianity spreads rapidly, and is accepted by the barbarians with as great avidity as by more civilized races. . . .

"Such being the condition of the times, there is little reason for surprise that they were characterized by dense ignorance, as well among the nobles as among the less-favored classes, and that this ignorance was but slightly mitigated even among the large majority of the clergy."

Throughout Europe generally, there was crass ignorance and superstition. Here and there a monastery arose to shed a tiny light through the encircling gloom. Charlemagne was first to attempt to provide free education for children of rich and poor alike. He himself had been so absorbed in the warrior's life that only in mature years did he find opportunity to set himself to the task of mastering writing.

In a letter to one of his abbots, Charlemagne commented: "We have frequently received letters from monks and in them have recognized correct sentiments, but an uncouth style and language. The sentiments inspired in them by their devotion to us they could not express correctly, because they had neglected the study of language. Therefore, we have begun to fear lest, just as the monks appear to have lost the art of writing, so also they may have lost the ability to understand the Holy Scriptures; and we all know that, though mistakes in words are dangerous, mistakes in understanding are still more so."

To remedy the situation, the emperor brought Alcuin from the cathedral school of York to his capital and established the famous Palace school, at which he, his children, their wives, and their children all began to study together. Alcuin brought three assistants from his York school to aid him, and from this educational center encouragement was given to the various monastic and church schools to improve the instruction given to the youth of the land. Charlemagne decreed that whenever vacancies occurred, only the most enlightened should be eligible to appointment. He

further issued a royal command in 802 that all should send their children to school, elementary instruction being free, while for more advanced training small fees were charged.

The instruction of mediæval schools, where anything beyond the rudiments of reading and writing were attempted, was based on the earlier Roman system of teaching what became known as the *Seven Liberal Arts*; this in turn had been founded on the Greek plan. Grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, geometry, astronomy and arithmetic were the "pillars of the house of Wisdom." The first three were known as the trivium; the last four as the quadrivium.

Grammar included literature as well as construction of speech; rhetoric included some slight acquaintance with law and the wording of legal documents. Dialectic was much like logic. It helped the Christian the more readily to refute heresies. Until the tenth century mathematics was limited to such knowledge as would enable one to determine the time of Easter and other church days. Astronomy dealt with the movement of the planets and the changing seasons. Music was often confined to familiarity with sacred songs.

The textbooks were few; ordinarily the teacher alone was supplied with one from which he read to the pupils, who wrote down what was thus dictated. Such copies as survive testify to their dull, dry character. Capella wrote an allegorical work consisting of nine books; it celebrated the marriage of *Philology* to *Mercury*, solemnized in the presence of all the gods. Then Grammatica, Dialectica, Rhetorica, Geometrica, Astronomia, Harmonica and Arithmetica came forward and each occupying a book, set forth what was known of that branch of learning. Isadore of Seville prepared an encyclopedia, embracing most of the learning of the time.

The following extract gives some conception of the questions and answers that composed a portion of the instruction, the pupils memorizing these answers until they could give them promptly:

Q. What is writing?

A. The keeper of history.

Q. What is speaking?

A. The interpretation of the soul.

- Q. What is it gives birth to speaking?
A. The tongue.
Q. What is the tongue?
A. The whip of the air.
Q. What is the air?
A. The preserver of life.
Q. What is life?
A. Happiness for the happy, misery for the miserable, the expectation of death.
Q. What is death?
A. An inevitable event, a doubtful journey, a subject of tears for the living, the confirmation of wills, the robber of men.
Q. What is man?
A. The slave of death, a passing traveler, a guest in his own abode.
Q. What is winter?
A. The exile of spring.
Q. What is spring?
A. The painter of earth.
Q. What is summer?
A. The power that clothes the earth and ripens fruits.
Q. What is autumn?
A. The granary of the year.
Q. What is the year?
A. The chariot of the world.

It is reasonable to suppose that such bizarre and whimsical colloquies were by no means the most illuminating part of the instruction imparted.

King Alfred, toward the close of the ninth century, performed for England much the same task that Charlemagne had undertaken for the western part of Europe. He tried to alleviate the darkness of ignorance and superstition in the island by establishing a central school at his court, and from it sending out encouragement to church and monastic schools of the realm. He himself contributed much to the learning of his time by his translations of Boëthius, and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of England*, at the same time causing the old *Saxon Chronicle* to be revised and continued.

With the extinction of such institutions as these of Charlemagne and King Alfred's in the tenth century, it

seemed as though their efforts had been in vain. Still, never again was the darkness quite so dense. Monastic schools from this time forward were better equipped to perform their great task of preserving learning until society was ready to provide places of instruction for the young. In these mediæval monasteries were kept burning those torches which alone mitigated the gloom until, with the restoration of peace, opportunity came for the arts to assert themselves.

“The first revival of learning under Charlemagne and Alcuin, though weakest, is yet of vital importance as a first stage in the evolution of modern education. Narrow and technical as was the instruction given, and brief as was the duration of the institutions founded, it still remains true that Charlemagne was the first monarch in the history of Europe—if not of the world—to attempt an establishment of universal gratuitous primary education, as well as of higher schools. Moreover, as a result of Alcuin’s organizing sagacity, a body of men devoted to teaching as well as learning was created, giving some degree of continuity to education down to the foundings of the universities and so sheltering studies in various monasteries and cathedrals that some of the greater schools thus kept alive—or offshoots from them—afterwards became natural receptacles for the new university life of the next age.”²

¹ Williams: *Hist. of Mediæval Education*, p. 19.

² West: Alcuin: intro.

FROM BEDE'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

The Angles, being invited into Britain, at first obliged the enemy to retire to a distance; but not long after, joining in league with them, turned their weapons upon their confederates. [A. D. 450-456.]

IN the year of our Lord 449, Martian being made emperor with Valentinian, and the forty-sixth from Augustus, ruled the empire seven years. Then the nation of the Angles, or Saxons, being invited by the aforesaid king, arrived in Britain with three long ships, and had a place assigned them to reside in by the same king, in the eastern part of the island, that they might thus appear to be fighting for their country, whilst their real intentions were to enslave it. Accordingly they engaged with the enemy, who were come from the north to give battle, and obtained the victory; which, being known at home in their own country, as also the fertility of the country, and the cowardice of the Britons, a more considerable fleet was quickly sent over, bringing a still greater number of men, which, being added to the former, made up an invincible army. The new comers received of the Britons a place to inhabit, upon condition that they should wage war against their enemies for the peace and security of the country, whilst the Britons agreed to furnish them with pay. Those who came over were of the three most powerful nations of Germany; Saxons, Angles and Jutes. From the Jutes are descended the people of Kent, and of the Isle of Wight, and those also in the province of the West-Saxons who are to this day called Jutes, seated opposite to the Isle of Wight. From the Saxons, that is, the country which is now called Old Saxony, came the East-Saxons, the South-Saxons, and the West-Saxons. From the Angles, that is, the country which is called Anglia, and which is said, from that time, to remain

desert to this day, between the provinces of the Jutes and the Saxons, are descended the East-Angles, the Midland-Angles and Mercians, all the race of the Northumbrians, that is, of those nations that dwell on the north side of the river Humber, and the other nations of the English. The two first commanders are said to have been Hengist and Horsa. Of whom Horsa, being afterwards slain in battle by the Britons, was buried in the eastern parts of Kent, where a monument, bearing his name, is still in existence. They were the sons of Victgilsus, whose father was Vecta, son of Woden; from whose stock the royal race of many provinces deduce their original. In a short time, swarms of the aforesaid nations came over into the island, and they began to increase so much, that they became terrible to the natives themselves who had invited them. Then, having on a sudden entered into league with the Picts, whom they had by this time repelled by the force of their arms, they began to turn their weapons against their confederates. At first, they obliged them to furnish a greater quantity of provisions; and, seeking an occasion to quarrel, protested, that unless more plentiful supplies were brought them, they would break the confederacy, and ravage all the island; nor were they backward in putting their threats in execution. In short, the fire kindled by the hands of these pagans, proved God's just revenge for the crimes of the people; not unlike that which being once lighted by the Chaldeans, consumed the walls and city of Jerusalem. For the barbarous conquerors acting here in the same manner, or rather the just Judge ordaining that they should so act, they plundered all the neighbouring cities and country, spread the conflagration from the eastern to the western sea, without any opposition, and covered almost every part of the devoted island. Public as well as private structures were overturned; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars; the prelates and the people, without any respect of persons, were destroyed with fire and sword; nor was there any to bury those who had been thus cruelly slaughtered. Some of the miserable remainder, being taken in the mountains, were butchered in heaps. Others, spent with hunger, came forth and submitted themselves to the enemy for food, being destined to undergo

perpetual servitude, if they were not killed even upon the spot. Some, with sorrowful hearts, fled beyond the seas. Others, continuing in their own country, led a miserable life among the woods, rocks, and mountains, with scarcely enough food to support life, and expecting every moment to be their last.

* * * * *

When the nation of the Picts received the faith. [A.D. 565.]

In the year of our Lord 565, when Justin, the younger, the successor of Justinian, had the government of the Roman empire, there came into Britain a famous priest and abbot, a monk by habit and life, whose name was Columba, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the northern Picts, who are separated from the southern parts by steep and rugged mountains; for the southern Picts, who dwell on this side of those mountains, had long before, as is reported, forsaken the errors of idolatry, and embraced the truth, by the preaching of Ninias, a most reverend bishop and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed at Rome, in the faith and mysteries of the truth; whose episcopal see, named after St. Martin the bishop, and famous for a stately church, (wherein he and many other saints rest in the body,) is still in existence among the English nation. The place belongs to the province of the Bernicians, and is generally called the White House, because he there built a church of stone, which was not usual among the Britons.

Columba came into Britain in the ninth year of the reign of Bridiuš, who was the son of Meilochon, and the powerful king of the Pictish nation, and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ, by his preaching and example, whereupon he also received of them the aforesaid island for a monastery, for it is not very large, but contains about five families, according to the English computation. His successors hold the island to this day; he was also buried therein, having died at the age of seventy-seven, about thirty-two years after he came into Britain to preach. Before he passed over into Britain, he had built a noble monastery in Ireland, which, from the great number of oaks, is

in the Scottish tongue called Dearm-ach—The Field of Oaks. From both which monasteries, many others had their beginning through his disciples, both in Britain and Ireland; but the monastery in the island where his body lies, is the principal of them all.

That island has for its ruler an abbot, who is a priest, to whose direction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, are subject, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk; of whose life and discourses some writings are said to be preserved by his disciples. But whatsoever he was himself, this we know for certain, that he left successors renowned for their continency, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. It is true they followed uncertain rules in their observance of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; wherefore they only practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetical, evangelical, and apostolical writings. This manner of keeping Easter continued among them for the space of 150 years, till the year of our Lord's incarnation 715.

But then the most reverend and holy father and priest, Egbert, of the English nation, who had long lived in banishment in Ireland for the sake of Christ, and was most learned in the Scriptures, and renowned for long perfection of life, came among them, corrected their error, and reduced them to the true and canonical day of Easter; the which they nevertheless did not always keep on the fourteenth moon with the Jews, as some imagined, but on Sunday, although not in the proper week. For, as Christians, they knew that the resurrection of our Lord, which happened on the first day after the Sabbath, was always to be celebrated on the first day after the Sabbath; but being rude and barbarous, they had not learned when that same first day after the Sabbath, which is now called the Lord's day, should come. But because they had not laid aside the fervent grace of charity, they were worthy to be informed in the true knowledge of this particular, according to the promise of the

apostle, saying, "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Of which we shall speak more fully in its proper place.

FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE

A. 381. This year Maximus the emperor obtained the empire; he was born in the land of Britain, and went thence into Gaul. And he there slew the emperor Gratian, and drove his brother, who was called Valentinian, out of the country. And Valentinian afterwards gathered an army and slew Maximus, and obtained the empire. In these days the heresy of Palagius arose throughout the world.

A. 382-408.

A. 409. This year the Goths took the city of Rome by storm, and after this the Romans never ruled in Britain; and this was about eleven hundred and ten years after it had been built. Altogether they ruled in Britain four hundred and seventy years since Caius Julius first sought the land.

A. 410-417.

A. 418. This year the Romans collected all the treasures that were in Britain, and some they hid in the earth, so that no one has since been able to find them; and some they carried with them into Gaul. . . .

A. 443. This year the Britons sent over sea to Rome and begged for help against the Picts; but they had none, because they were themselves warring against Attila, king of the Huns. And then they sent to the Angles, and entreated the like of the ethelings of the Angles. . . .

A. 565. This year Ethelbert succeeded to the kingdom of the Kentishmen, and held it fifty-three years. In his days the holy pope Gregory sent us baptism, that was in the two and thirtieth year of his reign: and Columba, a mass-priest, came to the Picts, and converted them to the faith of Christ: they are dwellers by the northern mountains. And their king gave him the island which is called Ii [Iona]: therein are five hides of land, as men say. There Columba built a monastery, and he was abbot there thirty-seven years, and there he died when he was seventy-two years old. His successors still have the place. The Southern Picts had been

baptized long before: bishop Ninia, who had been instructed at Rome, had preached baptism to them, whose church and his monastery is at Whitherne, consecrated in the name of St. Martin: there he resteth, with many holy men. Now in Ii there must ever be an abbot, and not a bishop; and all the Scottish bishops ought to be subject to him, because Columba was an abbot and not a bishop. . . .

A. 606. This year Pope Gregory died, about ten years after he had sent us baptism; his father was called Gordian, and his mother Silvia. . . .

A. 678. This year the star (called) a comet appeared in August, and shone like a sunbeam every morning for three months; and bishop Wilfrid was driven from his bishopric by King Egfrid; and two bishops were consecrated in his stead; Bosa to Deira, and Eata to Bernicia. And Eadhed was consecrated bishop over the men of Lindsey; he was the first of the bishops of Lindsey. . . .

A. 680. This year archbishop Theodore appointed a synod at Heathfield, because he wished to set forth aright the Christian faith. And the same year Hilda, abbess of Whitby, died. . . .

A. 809. This year the sun was eclipsed at the beginning of the fifth hour of the day on the 17th before the Kalends of August, the 2nd day of the week, the 29th of the moon.

A. 810-811.

A. 812. This year king Charlemagne died, and he reigned five and forty years; and archbishop Wulfred and Wigbert bishop of the West-Saxons both went to Rome. . . .

A. 871. Then Alfred the son of Ethelwulf, his brother, succeeded to the kingdom of the West-Saxons. And about one month after this, king Alfred with a small band fought against the whole army at Wilton, and put them to flight for a good part of the day; but the Danes had possession of the place of carnage. And this year nine general battles were fought against the army in the kingdom south of the Thames, besides which, Alfred the king's brother, and single ealdormen, and king's thanes, oftentimes made incursions on them, which were not counted: and within the year nine

earls and one king were slain. And that year the West-Saxons made peace with the army. . . .

A. 1017. This year Canute was chosen king.

FROM KING ALFRED'S VERSION OF THE CONSOLATIONS
OF BOËTHIUS

PROEM

King Alfred was the interpreter of this book, and turned it from book Latin into English, as it is now done. Now he set forth word by word, now sense from sense, as clearly and intelligently as he was able, in the various and manifold worldly cares that oft troubled him both in mind and in body. These cares are very hard for us to reckon, that in his days came upon the kingdoms to which he had succeeded, and yet when he had studied this book and turned it from Latin into English prose, he wrought it up once more into verse, as it is now done. And now he prayeth and in God's name beseecheth every man that careth to read this book, to pray for him, and not to blame him if he understand it more rightly than he (Alfred) could. For every man must, according to the measure of his understanding and leisure, speak what he speaketh and do what he doeth.

* * * * *

“Behold the sun and the other heavenly bodies; when black clouds come before them, they can no longer give out their light. So too at times the south wind in fierce storms stirreth up the sea that before was in calm weather as clear as glass to look upon; but as soon as it is troubled by the surging waves it very quickly groweth gloomy, that was but now so smiling to behold. Lo, the brook also swerveth from its right course, when a great rock rolling from the high mountain falleth into it, parting its waters, and damming up its proper course. Even so the gloom of thy troubled mind withstandeth the light of my teaching. But, if thou art desirous in good faith to know the true light, put away from thee evil joys and unprofitable, and also useless miseries and the evil dread of this world. That is to say, exalt not thyself beyond measure in thine health and hap-

piness, nor do thou again despair of all good in any adversity, for the mind is ever bound about with confusion in which either of these two ills holdeth sway."

Hereupon Philosophy was silent a little while until she had read the inmost thoughts of the Mind; and having read them she said, "If I have rightly read thy sadness, it comes to this, that thou hast utterly lost the worldly prosperity thou hadst once, and thou art now grieving over thy changed lot. I perceive clearly enough that worldly prosperity cunningly lures with all manner of sweets the mind that it wishes to beguile most; and then in the end it brings the mind when she least weeneth to despair and deepest sorrow. If thou wilt know whence cometh prosperity, thou mayest observe that it comes from covetousness of worldly goods. Next, if thou wilt learn its nature, know that it remains true to no man. By this thou mayest understand that thou hadst no joy when fortune was thine, and in losing it thou hast suffered no loss thereof. I thought I long ago had taught thee to recognize it, and I knew thou didst shrink from it, even when thou hadst it, though thou didst profit thereby. Further, I knew thou didst oft repeat my sayings against it, but I know that no habit can be changed in a man without his mind being in some measure affected, and therefore thou art now bereft of thy peace of mind.

"O Mind, what has cast thee into this sorrow and trouble? Thinkest thou this is something new or in any way unwonted that has come upon thee, such as has never ailed man before? If thou thinkest it thine own fault that thy prosperity is gone, then art thou in error, for its ways are even so. In thee it but fulfilled its own nature, and by its changing it made known its own instability. When it most flattered thee, it was the very same as it now is, though it was enticing thee to an unreal happiness. Now hast thou perceived the fickle faith of blind pleasure; yet that which is now plain to thee is still hidden from many others. Now thou knowest the ways of worldly prosperity, and how it changeth. If then it is thy wish to be in its service, and thou likest its nature, why dost thou mourn so grievously? Why not change also in its company? If thou wouldst avoid its treachery, do thou despise it and drive it

from thee, for it is tempting thee to thy ruin. That same prosperity, the loss of which thou art grieving over, would have left thee in peace, hadst thou but refused to accept it; and now it hath forsaken thee of its own will, not of thine, being such that no man loseth it without grief. Dost thou then count a thing so precious and so dear which is neither safe to hold nor easy to part with, and which, when it shall slip away from a man, he shall let go with the greatest wound to his mind? Since therefore thou mayest not keep the joys of this world after thy will, and they bring thee to sorrow when they vanish from thee, why else do they come save as a foretokening of sorrow and pangs unrelieved? Not on worldly wealth alone should a man fix his thoughts while he possesses it, but every prudent mind will consider the end thereof, and guard equally against its threats and its blandishments. If however, thou art desirous to be its servant, thou must needs do cheerfully what belongs to its service, in obedience to its nature and its will; and, if thou wouldst have it put on other garb than is its will and its wont, art thou not then doing thyself dishonour, in that thou art rebelling against the lordship thou thyself hast freely chosen? And nevertheless thou shalt not be able to change its ways and kind. Surely thou knowest that if thou spreadest out thy boat's sail to the wind thou leavest all thy journey to the wind's mercy. So too if thou give thyself over to the service of worldly prosperity it is but right that thou shouldst follow its ways. Thinkest thou that thou canst turn back the whirling wheel in its course? No more canst thou turn aside the changing course of worldly riches. . . .

“Though the covetous man gain riches in number as the grains of sand *by these sea-cliffs*, or as the stars that shine of dark nights, he never leaveth to bewail his poverty; and though God glut the desire of wealthy men with gold and silver and all manner of precious things, yet is the thirst of their greed never quenched, for its bottomless abyss hath many empty chambers yet to fill. Who can ever give enough to the frenzy of the covetous? The more that is given him the greater his desire.

“How wilt thou answer Riches if she say to thee, ‘Why

dost thou reproach me, O Mind? Why art thou enraged against me? In what have I angered thee? 'Twas thou that first desiredst me, not I thee; thou didst set me on the throne of thy Creator, when thou lookedst to me for the good thou shouldst seek from Him. Thou sayest I have deceived thee, but I may rather answer that thou hast deceived me, seeing by reason of thy lust and thy greed the Creator of all things hath been forced to turn away from me. Thou art indeed more guilty than I, both for thine own wicked lusts and because owing to thee I am not able to do the will of my Maker. He lent me to thee to enjoy in accordance with His Commandments, and not to perform the will of thine unlawful greed.'

"Answer us both now," said Philosophy, "as thou wilt; both of us await thine answer."

[After King Alfred had translated Boethius' *Consolations* into English prose, he afterwards turned it into verse.]

Thou mayst by the sun see most clearly,
And by each of the other orbs of heaven
That shine most brightly over the boroughs,
If a dark cloud cometh before them
They cannot give forth such a bright gleam
Till the thick mist grow thinner before them.
So too the south breeze fiercely stirreth
The calm grey ocean clear as glass;
Then mighty billows mingle the waters,
Stir the whale-sea; fierce waxeth ocean
That but shortly before was blithe to look on.
Oft too the well-spring is wont to trickle
From the hoar cliff, cool and sparkling,
And onward flowing, a straight course followeth,
To its home fleeteth, till there falleth upon it
A rock from the mountain, that lieth in its midst
Rolled from the peak; parted in twain
The rill is broken, the brook's clear water
Stirred and clouded; the stream is turned
Away from its course, cleft into runnels.
So now the darkness that dimmeth thy heart
Wisheth to turn back the light of my teaching,
And sorely trouble thy spirit's thoughts.

But if thou art willing, as well thou mayst be,
The light of the truth, clearly to learn,
The brightness of faith, then shalt thou forsake
Vain surfeit of pleasure, profitless joys.
Thou shalt too forsake the evil fear
Of worldly afflictions, nor wax ever for them
Utterly hopeless; no, nor have thyself
Weakened with wealth, lest with it thou be
Brought to sorrow through the sin of pride,
And too puffed up by prosperous fortune,
By joys of the world. Nor again too feebly
Lose all thy faith in future good,
When in this world the weight of afflictions
Beareth on thee sorely, and thou art beset
With utter terror; for ever it tideth
That a man's breast is bound most firmly
With dire confusion if either of these dangers
Here may trouble him, torture his spirit.
For both these hardships, hand in hand,
A mist misleading draw over the mind,
So that the sun eternal its light may not send forth
For the black mists until these be blown away.

Then Wisdom again unlocked her word-hoard,
Her tale of sooth sang in these words:
'While the bright sun most clear is beaming,
Gleaming in heaven, gloom enwrappeth
Over the world all other bodies;
For their light is nought, nothing at all,
When set against the sun's great brightness.
When softly bloweth from south and west
The wind 'neath heav'n, then soon wax
The flowers of the field, fain to be able.
But the stiff storm-wind, when it strongly bloweth
From out of the north-east, how soon it nippeth
The rose's beauty! By the northern blast
The spacious ocean is helpless spurned
Till strongly heaving it striketh the beach.
Alas, that in the world nothing weareth
Firm and lasting long on this earth!

LETTER FROM ALCUIN TO CHARLEMAGNE

I your Flaccus, according to your request and your gracious kindness, am busy under the roof of St. Martin's in conferring the honey of the Holy Scriptures on my many pupils. I am anxious to have others imbibe the old wine of ancient learning; I shall soon begin to nourish yet others on the fruits of grammatical delving; and I am most desirous of illuminating some with a knowledge of the order of the heavenly bodies, which seem painted, so to speak, on the dome of some magnificent palace. I have become all things to all men (1 Cor. i. 22), in order that I may train multitudes to the power of God's holy Church and the glory of your imperial kingdom, lest the grace of Almighty God in me should be without fruit (1 Cor. xv. 10), and your munificent bounty unavailing. But your servant lacks the scarcer books of scholarly learning, which I was wont to have in my own country (thanks to the generosity and devoted care of my teacher, and to my own humble efforts); and I call your Majesty's attention to it in order that it may perchance please you, who are so anxiously concerned about all branches of study, to have me commission some of our youths to procure certain needful works for us, and bring the flowers of England with them to France; so that an elegant garden may not be confined to York, but at Tours also may be found the blooming of Paradise and its plentiful fruitage; so that the south wind when it comes may make the gardens on the Loire burst into flower, and their perfumed breath exhale, and finally, what follows in the Canticle, from which I have taken this metaphor, may be brought about (Cant. v. 1, 2). "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk; Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved. I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, sayings, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Or even this exhortation of the prophet Isaiah, urging us to acquire knowledge: "All ye who thirst, come to the waters;

and ye who have no money, hearken, buy and eat; come, without money and without price, and buy wine and milk" (Isaiah iv. 1).

And here is one matter that your gracious zeal will not pass over: how on every page of the Holy Scriptures we are urged to the acquirement of knowledge; how nothing is finer for assuring a happy life, nothing more pleasant in the carrying out, nothing more effective against sin, nothing more praiseworthy in high position, than for men to live according to the teaching of philosophers. Furthermore, nothing is more essential to well governance of the people, nothing better for the guidance of life in the ways of upright character, than the grace given by wisdom, and the glory of discipline and the might of learning. It is for this reason that Solomon, the wisest of men, declares in its praise, "Better is wisdom than all precious things, and more to be desired" (Prov. viii. 11). To secure this by every possible effort, and to obtain possession of it by daily endeavor, do you, lord King, exhort the youth in your Majesty's palace to strive after this in the flower of their youth, so that they may be esteemed worthy to live through an honored old age, and by means of this attain to eternal happiness. I myself, as my nature is, shall not be idle in sowing seeds of wisdom among your servants in the realm, remembering the injunction, "Sow thy seed in the morning, and at eventide let not thy hand cease; since thou knowest not what will spring up, whether these or those, and if both together, still better is it" (Eccles. xi. 6). In the morning of my life, and in the fruitful season of my studies, I sowed seed in Britain; and now that my blood has grown cool in the evening of life, I still do not cease, but sow the seed in France, trusting that by the grace of God both may spring up.

And though my body has become infirm, I find consolation in the utterance of St. Jerome, who says in his letter to Nepotianus, "Nearly all the bodily powers are changed in the old, and only wisdom can grow, while the others must decay." And a little farther on he says, "The old age of those who have adorned their youth with noble accomplishments, and have meditated day and night upon the law of God, grows ever more accomplished with years, more culti-

vated through experience, wiser by the passage of time; and it plucks the finest fruit of ancient learning." Any one who desires may read, in this epistle devoted to the praise of wisdom, much concerning the philosophic studies of antiquity, and can understand how zealous the ancients were to abound in the grace of wisdom. I have noted that your zeal, which is most laudable and pleasing to God, is ever progressing towards this wisdom, and finds pleasure in it; and that you adorn the splendor of your material empire with still greater intellectual splendor. May our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the supreme type of divine wisdom, guard and magnify you in this, and lift you to the attainment of His own holy and eternal insight.

MEDIAEVAL STORIES AND THEIR MODERN SUCCESSORS

I

IN order to understand the stories that have come down to us from the Middle Ages, one has to bear in mind certain facts about the way they were told and the way they were spread abroad from land to land. People were very much alive then, and loved stories as much as people do now. Indeed, they had very lively fancies, else we should not be reading today what they wrote; nor would our poets and novelists be going back to them for inspiration and material, as they have been doing very freely for more than a hundred years. Perhaps it was because mediæval people tried to live by rule, and achieved at the end of the period a system in government and thought for which they had been struggling ever since Rome fell, that they let their imaginations run riot to such good purpose when it came to story-telling. At all events, the tales were made; and a good many of them have never been forgotten.

As to the way they were made, we must remember, in the first place, that there were no printed books in those days and that people generally had to have stories read to them, or else recited. Even if one knew how to read for oneself, as very well-bred persons often did not, one could not own many books. Copying them by hand was a slow and expensive business, though it produced wonderfully beautiful volumes sometimes. One depended, therefore, on professional entertainers, or else on some clerk who could read to a group of eager listeners. Mediæval stories, whether in prose or verse, were written to be heard—not simply to be read out of a book in solitude.

That is why the earliest stories that have come down

to us were made in verse. Verse is much easier than prose to commit to memory, and it was better also for recitation, so that in the ages when books were rare most tales were poetical. The kings of our remotest ancestors of the Germanic stock had bards at their little courts, who composed verses and chanted them, while professional mimes seem to have wandered the roads of Europe, undisturbed by the breaking up of the Empire, during all the centuries from the great days of Rome to the rise of the modern drama in the sixteenth century. Whether they were called *scops* or *joculatores*, *jongleurs* or *minnesingers*, they had tales in stock of various kinds; and they moved their hearers to high thoughts or mirthful, as the occasion required.

The part played by these vagabonds in the making and circulation of stories was a very great one. As early as the seventh century some verses were composed in England, which told in catalogue fashion how such a wanderer of the old Germanic times went from court to court and was honored everywhere. We know the poem as *Widsith*, which means "Far-Traveller," and we may take the hero's adventures as typical of the minstrel's, not only in that age but in all the centuries down to modern times.

But minstrels were not the only folk who made up stories and carried them about. Neither in the Dark Ages nor in the Middle Ages that followed were people altogether stay-at-homes. The impulse to travel did not die out with the Great Migrations that came to a climax in the fifth century. There were the Scandinavians, for example, who explored and ravaged and conquered down to the eleventh century; almost before they had settled down, the Crusaders began their romantic and generally unsuccessful expeditions to the East; and before the Crusades had ended, began the story of the adventurous merchants, who took Asia as well as Europe into the field of their operations, and by the fourteenth century traded with China quite as familiarly as did the captains of our clipper ships in modern times. All these people not only lived stories of adventure, but brought home tales they had heard.

The Church, too, because it was the one great stable international institution, played a very important part in providing stories and circulating them. We shall see, as we go on, how popular were the legends of the saints; but in other ways also the Church cannot be left out of the history of mediæval narrative. By its very organization it helped the free circulation not only of ideas but of tales. It used the international language—Latin—and it was equally at home in all the kingdoms of western Europe. Its clergy were moved from land to land, and they looked to Rome for direction. The monastic orders had seats in many countries, while the friars preached and taught and cared for the sick without any distinction of national boundaries. Pilgrims, moreover, visited shrines in all parts of Europe, as well as the Holy Land itself, and must have scattered tales as they went. The extent to which people travelled for religious reasons is often forgotten, but it should not be overlooked. Chaucer's Wife of Bath, who had been in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and the Holy Land, is a typical figure.

Finally it ought to be remembered that nationalities were less fixed in those days than they are in modern times. When Norman dukes reigned over England and English kings over French provinces, when Germany and Italy were vague names for regions of shifting principalities and free cities, men did not think of their native lands quite as we do now. For a century and a half, for example, nobody minded the fact that French was the language used by the educated classes in England. People used the speech that was convenient to their purpose, and had no feeling that a thing was foreign to them because it was written or spoken in a tongue they understood only imperfectly, if at all. Instead, they hoped for some translation or other, and usually got it in the course of time, since translation was a much-practiced art. It is not too much to say that Europe held its stories as common property in the Middle Ages, and that every nation drew upon the fund at its own pleasure. No one cared whence the tales came, so long as they were good tales.

Under conditions such as I have briefly sketched, post-
VI—13

Roman and mediæval story-telling thrived. In the wattled stockade of the Germanic chieftain the bard sang his lays, and in the castle of the feudal lord heroic deeds were chanted. When the refinements of chivalry had come in, the lady of the castle listened with her maidens to romances in verse that dealt with themes of love as well as war. A little later still, the ever more prosperous burgher and his dame whiled away their hours of idleness with similar tales. In the market-place and on the village green lesser folk heard and were thrilled with horror or delight at the adventures of heroes and heroines dressed up to suit the taste of the humble audience. And all the while, in houses of religion, the monks and nuns listened to the reading of saints' lives when they sat down to their sober meals, for reading in the refectories was a customary practice. No one had to do without stories, for the provision was ample, which goes to show that in mediæval times the needs of human nature were well understood. All the world loves a story, and in one fashion or another will satisfy the want.

First of all, the people of Germanic stock made songs that were epic in quality at least, about deeds of valor and marvelous adventures. These lays had as their heroes, we are sure, gods and demi-gods, as well as men who approached their divinities in bravery and strength. Fortunately for us, the Norsemen, isolated in northwestern Europe until they began to be pirates and conquerors in the ninth century, kept their primitive beliefs and ways longer than other Europeans; and the story-songs they composed are preserved to us in the collection known as the *Poetic Edda*, which was put together before the end of the twelfth century. Very wild and sometimes incoherent these poems are, but they have great beauty, too, both of conception and of phrase. They represent the kind of story that all the tribesmen of the North must have known and loved. Other tales of the Scandinavians are known to us through the *Prose Edda*, which was written in the thirteenth century, and through the *Sagas*, also in prose, which have the same fascinating quality of imagination and are easier for the modern reader to understand. The people of Norway and Iceland were, you see, among the best

makers of stories the world has ever known. They invented boldly and imagined vividly, and did not waste words. Their tales of adventure and daring, it is safe to predict, will never be forgotten.

Far earlier than they, though less primitive, is the poem called *Beowulf*, which was actually written in northern England somewhere between 685 and 725, though it deals with legends and historical events that go back to the days before the Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain. It is the most ambitious work left to us that was based on Germanic hero tales and composed in the epic vein. That it did not stand alone, however, we know from other fragments. The temper of the people was suited to such compositions; and the poet of *Beowulf*, though christianized and perhaps learned in the lore of the monks, kept the quality of the old days of his pagan forefathers even when writing an epic that fell in with the tradition of the Greeks and Romans. *Beowulf* has not the rich magic of Homer. Comparatively speaking, the story moves jerkily and is thin of phrase, but it is a very noble poem, all the same. It used to be thought a primitive poem, but it is not that, any more than is the *Odyssey*. However he came by his art, the man who tells us how this hero went to the rescue of King Hrothgar and in old age fought a mortal combat with a fire dragon, was not a naïve and untutored person. He knew very well that he was making epic poetry, and he made it with a boldness of imagination that lifted his work to a high place in the domain of epic verse.

Very gifted the Anglo-Saxons for a few generations showed themselves to be. At about the time *Beowulf* was composed, other poets were using themes of Old Testament history, as well as native stories; and they have left us the *Genesis* and *Exodus*, for example, which are romantic and impressionistic in style, but truly epic in quality. The Cædmon, about whom Bede tells us so charmingly in his *History*, cannot be set down as the author of any of the surviving poems; but in the latter part of the eighth century a brilliant and learned man called Cynewulf actually signed his name in acrostics to a group of poems, two of which deal in the heroic manner with the lives of

St. Juliana and St. Helena, and one in rhapsodical fashion with the redemption of the world by Christ. Almost equally powerful is the *Andreas*, which tells of the adventures of the apostle Andrew among the cannibalistic barbarians, and the *Death of Guthlac*, who was a hermit of the English Fens. It did not matter greatly to these poets whether they treated Christian themes or pagan ones: they made of both much the same sort of thing—poetry of admirable quality. By some fortunate combination of elements, their heritage of pagan tradition when brought into contact with the culture of the Roman Church produced heroic verse different from that of any other race and well worthy of remembrance by modern readers.

Elsewhere also, the native stories were not forgotten by the Germanic peoples because they became Christians and took over whatever had survived of the civilization of antiquity. This is shown most strikingly by a poem written in mediæval Germany: the *Nibelungenlied*. It was not composed until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when a new fashion in story-telling had come in, but it was built up out of tales known to Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons of the old time, and indeed equally well to all the Germanic tribes. Courtly romance has tempered these themes, as they appear in the *Nibelungenlied*, but it had not yet erased them from the memory of men. So we get in this noble poem a combination of epic and romance: something akin to each yet different from both—Germanic hero-tales as they appeared to mediæval knights and ladies who had been nurtured in the chivalric code of France. It was this that appealed to Wagner, no doubt, when he took the stories of the *Nibelungenlied* as the basis of his grandiose Cycle.

The lasting effect of the impulse that led to the making of *Beowulf* on the one hand, and of the *Eddas* on the other, is shown yet again in the French *chansons de geste*, such as the *Song of Roland*, *Huon of Bordeaux*, and *Ogier the Dane*. Into the complicated question of the origin of these poems, which group themselves about the figure of Charlemagne just as cycles of romances were later to center around King Arthur, we need not enter. Perhaps they were a less spontaneous growth than used to be thought, for it

appears that some of the legends they embody were deliberately propagated by certain French monasteries; but they nevertheless show that the imagination of the heroic age was still active among the Franks and the Normans of the eleventh century. There is in these *chansons de geste* the same glorification of physical strength and daring, the same intrepidity of spirit, and the same loyalties of heart and action that run through the hero-tales of the North. A Beowulf would have understood the feelings of a Roland, as he made his last stand at Roncevaux. Not even in Old English literature are the virtues that the Germanic tribes brought to the civilization of western Europe better exemplified than in the *Song of Roland*. It was significant that a minstrel should have chanted the poem at the Battle of Hastings, for the Normans were, after all, not conquering for the mere sake of conquest, but rounding out a cycle of events that had shattered Europe to begin with, but was at length to build up the splendid new fabric of the mediæval and modern world.

As times changed, story-telling changed also. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the way men thought and, to a very considerable degree, the way men acted, were modified by causes that had already been at work in the preceding centuries but had not come to full fruition. Now, as feudalism performed its useful work of systematizing the relations of man to man, as the code of chivalry softened in some respects their manners, as the reform and growth of the monastic orders gave learning new impetus and the useful arts new expression, as the cult of the Virgin and—coincidentally with it—a higher conception of woman's place in the world were caught up by the imaginations of the slowly forming nations, the story-tellers found new themes to deal with and a new fashion of dealing with them.

This did not mean that the old hero-tales were altogether forgotten. The *Nibelungenlied*, as we have just seen, shows that this was not the case. Similarly the stories of Charlemagne and his paladins continued to be attractive. They were retold—most of them—in a new dress, which strangely altered them, though it did not destroy their stirring plots. There was a change of emphasis,

that was all. Adventure did not cease to fascinate in this new time, but warlike prowess became subordinated to love as the chief incentive to action. Wherefore the hero-tales did not satisfy all requirements, even when remade. New plots had to be found.

This presented no difficulty in an age when material came to hand from all directions. Without being put to the trouble of inventing stories, which mediæval writers seldom cared to do, the minstrels and court poets did not lack exciting plots. From the Celts, whose imaginations had spun wonderful fancies about a shadowy King Arthur and a host of lesser beings, there came a wealth of themes. The Crusaders and pilgrims and merchants, who were penetrating the East, brought back equally romantic tales. In England the wars with the Scandinavians had left vague recollections to serve as the basis for fiction. Out of books, too, in which the wars of Alexander and the sieges of Thebes and Troy were described, other stories came. Besides which, there were folk-tales everywhere, which could easily be turned to account.

The fashion of all these stories was that of the romance, which from the twelfth century until our own day has never gone completely out of favor, though it has had periods of decline and some very strange manifestations. Now, the romance belongs to what may be called the literature of escape rather than to the literature of interpretation, which explains most of its peculiar characteristics. By the literature of escape I mean books designed to lead the reader away from the world he actually lives in, into a world of imagination and fulfilled desire. Lyric poetry can do this for us, and drama can do it sometimes; but narratives with certain qualities can do it equally well. Such tales were the romances of the Middle Ages, which provided all sorts of people with pictures of life as they liked to see it in day dreams. Kings and knights had wonderful adventures of love and warfare in these tapestries of fancy. They went on impossible quests and, though baffled by circumstances and assailed by monsters, came triumphantly at last to their destined goal of happiness or heroic death. Ladies of more than human beauty

and virtue suffered trials that only they could have endured, and set tasks for their lovers that even the lovers of romance could not have accomplished except as inspired by womanly perfection. It did not matter that the plots of such tales wandered, for they rambled in an earthly paradise where every incident was a marvel, just as were every hero and every heroine. If heroes were noble and their mistresses surpassingly lovely, the villains were black enough to furnish a proper contrast. The enchantresses, too, behaved exceedingly ill, although they sometimes—poor things—proved to be bespelled and so turned into princesses at the last.

Stories of this sort might be in either verse or prose, but until the fourteenth century in France and the fifteenth in England they were customarily poetical, since metre served best a non-reading public. They were written not merely for the upper classes, for whom the royal court was the natural center and the fashions of the court the natural manners. Chaucer represents Criseyde in beleaguered Troy as sitting with two other ladies in a “paved parlour,” hearing a maiden read the romance of Thebes. Such were the ways of great folk in palaces. But the common people had romances especially made for them, as is well illustrated by the very jolly *Haveloc the Dane*, of which the English version, written in the latter part of the thirteenth century, could not possibly have amused a lady of the court but would have delighted any crowd gathered round a minstrel of the market-place. Haveloc was a true prince, and eventually won both Denmark and England as his kingdoms, but he went through an apprenticeship as fisher-boy and scullion before he ousted the miscreant lords who were keeping both him and the girl he married out of their rightful inheritances. Of course the girl was a king’s daughter—the real queen of England, though compelled to marry an apparent scullion. Because of his royal birth, Haveloc had a king mark on his shoulder, and perhaps on the same account he could put the shot farther than any of the rabble. At all events, he was the ideal king of the common crowd—at once what we moderns have learned to call democratic and at the same time a ruler of men.

Very different from *Haveloc* were the romances with which such writers as Chrestien de Troyes and Marie de France entertained the courts of the French and English kings in the twelfth century. Chrestien was among the first to dress up Celtic tales of Arthur for polite ears, and in some respects he was never surpassed as a writer of chivalric romance. He played with his stories, to be sure, but he was writing for a group of people who considered themselves, evidently, quite as sophisticated and knowing as any circle in the London or New York of today. His *Erec* and *Lancelot* and *Perceval* are well-told stories, even though they make the knights of King Arthur's court too much like the dandies who sunned themselves in the favor of Eleanor of Poitou and Marie of Champagne. Marie de France, who wrote in England despite her name, was not less elegant in the turn she gave to the stories of the Arthurian knights; but she had an imagination less dry and hard, and she made lays that can still give delight to anyone who loves romance. She was one of the most gifted women of the Middle Ages, and, more than that, she had a charm that defies the centuries.

The Arthurian tales—probably because they were essentially such admirable stories—had the good fortune to fall into the hands of other poets of more than ordinary ability. The Anglo-Norman Thomas, whose *Tristan* survives only in meager fragments, was a master both of narrative style and of imaginative verse. Never, perhaps, has the love of Tristan and Iseult been told with such truth to human feeling and with such charm as in this work of the mid-twelfth century. Even the great Gottfried von Strassburg, whose version of the story in High German is one of the finest monuments of the Middle Ages, scarcely equalled—certainly did not surpass—the Norman *trouvère* who on English soil made of Tristan's love an immortal tale. Gottfried himself, who lived very early in the thirteenth century, had contemporary poets who dealt nobly with Arthurian themes. Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, indeed, is perhaps an even nobler poem than Gottfried's *Tristan*, and it is unquestionably the greatest treatment of the Grail story that has ever been written.

To enumerate even the more important romances that were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries would involve us in a bewildering catalogue and would serve no useful purpose. What should be remembered is that stories of love and adventure from very various sources were the fashion of the day in all European countries, and both stimulated and satisfied the imaginations of men and women who were living in times at least as eager and questioning as our own. The love they idealized was not the romantic love of modern days; it was a thing apart from marriage, and in practice it doubtless led to grave abuses, but it performed the great social service of lifting woman—in theory, at least—to a position she had never before attained, and of making her an object of worship as well as of desire. Similarly, the adventures upon which the romancers dwelt were conceived according to an ideal that in the long run was of inestimable service to the world. The heroes of these mediæval tales were made to woo by the rules of courtly love and to fight by the code of chivalry. It is beside the point to argue that neither ideal could be perfectly attained. The pertinent fact is this: that from these codes, reflected and propagated by the romances, many of the most precious virtues of the modern world have directly grown.

Note—Continued on page 507.

MEDIÆVAL LITERATURE

THE Middle Ages have been defined as "the great stretch of time, some thousand years, between the decadence of the pure Classics and the appearance of the Renaissance." From the blending of Græco-Roman elements on the one hand, and Teutonic elements on the other, a new civilization evolved which was neither Roman nor German but a fusion of the two.

The principal occupation during the early Middle Ages was fighting; those either physically or temperamentally unfitted for the turmoil of war found shelter in the strong organization of the Church. Military affairs were the chief concern of the political world; religion, of the Church. It was therefore natural that the earliest songs to develop amid such conditions were either epical, extolling valor and brave deeds, or religious, upholding the virtues which the pious felt it desirable that people generally should respect and endeavor to cultivate.

Latin was the language of statecraft, of learning, of religion. It alone was employed by scholars; in it text books were written and the church service repeated; in it patient monks copied such manuscripts as they possessed. Yet it scarcely need be said that Latin was not the speech of the masses. In their northern homes around the Baltic each Germanic people had possessed its own crude speech and when Goths, Vandals, Franks and Burgundians pressed into different parts of the old Roman Empire, they quickly added to their stock Latin or provincial words which they found in use around them. From such linguistic evolution, reaching over centuries, came the vernaculars which were forerunners of modern languages. Although scholars were finally to give them refinement and completeness, it was in the daily speech of the people, crude, like the life they led and the customs they followed, that several European languages originated.

Although those boasting an education held the vernacular in contempt, in an age when even the emperor Charlemagne could only write his name and the masses could neither read nor write, it was not to be expected that their songs would be couched in a classical tongue. Such mental diversion as the common people enjoyed, and many of the upper classes as well, was supplied by tales handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. As in all ages of ignorance and simplicity, the story-teller was greatly in demand. Some of the stories had their origin in legends and traditions brought by tribes from their far-away homes in the north; some grew up around such illustrious personages as Clovis, Charles Martel, and other kings and chieftains. The religious songs were invented by pious monks or adapted by them from Latin stories. All possessed certain poetic qualities produced by alliteration and measure and were either sung or recited.

The religious poems usually sang of the virtues of the saints, the lives of some fifty being thus popularized. Some of these originated in Western Asia; some in Ireland. The oldest surviving example of French literature is said to be the *Life of St. Alexis*. Besides these stories of the saints, some glorified the simple folk who did their best according to their light. Illustrative of these is the tale of the *Tumbler of Notre Dame*, a lad so ignorant that he could not even repeat his prayers correctly. In despair it penetrated to his dull mind that he should do the only thing he was able: to perform his part as a tumbler, before the holy shrine, to the glory of the Mother Mary. When his brethren chided him for mockery, as they called his effort, the Mother Mary came down from her shrine and wiped the perspiration from his hot brow. Humility, piety and human sympathy were all taught by little stories such as this. Others pictured the bliss of heaven where love, regarded as sullied and to be avoided in a world like this, might be enjoyed on a more exalted plane.

The value of these early bits of literary expression lies in the reflection of manners and customs, of the daily life and attitude of mind which they preserve.

Of far greater influence upon later literature were the epics known as *chansons de geste*, or *songs of deeds* or *accomplishment*. More than a hundred survive and doubtless far more have perished. As would be expected, many clustered around Charlemagne. They exaggerated his greatness and his conquests, his companions; even his stature and ravenous appetite. Greatest of the *chansons de geste* is the *Song of Roland*, a poem first mentioned in the year 1066, when it is recorded that 'the Normans marched to the songs of Roland and his brave companions.' One old manuscript of this poem survives in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Another is preserved in the Library of St. Marks, in Venice. Not until 1837 was it translated and made available for the general reader.

Like most of these epics, the poem had a slight historical foundation although so far did it finally depart from the event it celebrated that it is difficult to recognize it. At first about four thousand lines in length, it expanded to include almost ten times as many. Into it heroic incidents from many sources gradually gathered. It sings of war and the undaunted courage of warriors. Love, that insistent theme of the later troubadours, has so slight a part in it that we merely learn that the beautiful Lady Aude fell dead when informed of the death of Roland, to whom she was betrothed. Other lands produced their own epics. Beowulf came from the home of the Vikings; the Legends of King Arthur were of Celtic origin.

The influence of Christianity and the standards cherished by the knights were destined to develop a new attitude toward women and all helpless, defenseless creatures. Chivalry, with its accompanying note of love, had been unknown in antiquity.

So long as these tales were spoken or sung, they were composed in verse; when reading became more and more general they were produced in prose. The loveliest of all mediæval stories is that of *Aucassin and Nicolette*, wherein poetry and prose combine.

As satires on the abuses of the age, whether of the robber knight, of the indulgent monk, the hypocritical palmer, the wanton wife, the court of justice where injustice alone

obtained, we find the *beast fables*, most famous being *Reynard the Fox*.

For one story that survives today in manuscript, a score or more have been lost. Modern writers owe much to those surviving. The Knights of the Round Table are known throughout the enlightened world through Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The search for the Holy Grail, the subject of a cycle of mediæval stories, inspired Lowell to write the poem by which he is most widely known: *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. Wagner found inspiration for his great music dramas in the *Nibelungenlied*. Walter Crane's illustrations of *Reynard the Fox* are the delight of the fun-loving everywhere.

It is necessary to know in brief the substance of these mediæval tales since they have become embodied in all modern literature to such an extent that authors assume familiarity with them, making frequent mention of Galahad, Percival, Oliver, and the rest of the gallant host whose names shine forth from the days of knight-errantry. However, it should not be forgotten that these stories were composed to please and entertain and, just as they delighted those who heard a thousand years and more ago, so are they appreciated by those who read them now for the sheer joy of the stories themselves. Speaking of this poetry, Gaston Paris says: "It sung itself out in the sun, in the streets and squares, on the battlefield, along the highroads, among folk going on pilgrimage, in the doorway of churches, and at the feasts of great lords." While the precious manuscripts that have preserved it for later generations are housed in great libraries, modern translations are now available setting the stories into English, at the same time preserving the spirit of the original texts.

First and last, the Middle Ages possessed high dramatic qualities. Consequently, as would be expected, these tales are gripping, tense, full of fire and action, thrilling and colorful. Like the Homeric poems, they bespeak a time when life was more spontaneous, more vigorous and natural than today. Songs of the brave were welcome. Our very word *chivalry* is derived from the French word for *horse*

and reflects a period when the proud knight rode a prancing steed, while the commoner went afoot into battle.

The brandishing of weapons, the glister of armour, the flourish of the trumpets and excitement of the tournament, the glamour of days when knighthood was in flower—all these are to be found in the epics which have come down from the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, detached fragments being known long years before they were committed to writing. To eliminate them from literature would be to leave a gap which otherwise could not be bridged.

“SONGS OF DEEDS”

MANY were the *chansons de geste* that sang of the exploits of Charlemagne. One told of the magic ring which vouchsafed his undying affection to the Eastern princess whom he made his wife; how she concealed it before her death in her mouth so that none other might possess it; as a result the great emperor could not be drawn from her bier until his bishop, Turpin, discovered its hiding place and tossed it into a lake, by whose side Charlemagne was later attracted to build his palace. Another related a fanciful excursion made to Palestine; a third, the emperor's wrath when his sister Bertha married against his will and was forsaken by him until her son, Roland, still a child, walked boldly into the king's palace to procure food for his mother and by his bearing and courage aroused Charlemagne's curiosity until he finally effected a reconciliation between brother and sister. Of all the songs that extolled this king's wide power and popularity, the *Song of Roland* alone holds an important place today in literature.

It happened in the month of August, 778 A. D., that Charlemagne, having successfully conducted a campaign in northernmost Spain, suddenly decided to return to France. His main army had crossed the Pyrenees safely when the rearguard was surprised by Basque mountaineers who lay in ambush. Taken unawares, they were cut to pieces and Roland, Count of Brittany, fell. Ere two hundred years had flown the story had undergone such transformation as to be scarcely recognizable. It has been significantly said that when a defeat is celebrated in song it must be made glorious. Posterity did not find it gratifying to acknowledge that a portion of the great king's army had been destroyed by insignificant mountaineers; instead, Saracens were substituted. Having promised peace, they were shown as treacherously violating the king's confidence and trust,

giving ear to a traitor and loading him with gifts for having pointed out the way to injure Charles. Ganelon, the unfriendly stepfather of Roland, is appointed by Charlemagne to journey into the heart of Saracen Spain to deliver a royal message. Reluctant to undertake so perilous a journey, he feels that Roland is the cause of the task being laid upon him and he plots the count's ruin. He therefore makes it appear to the Saracen ruler that the latter's safety depends upon the death of Roland, who is no longer merely the Count of Brittany but has become nephew of Charlemagne. Falling into the snare Ganelon sets for him, the Saracen king agrees to destroy the rearguard which Roland commands. A guarantee of peace is given the emperor, his army departs for Aix and the rest is easily accomplished.

The poem is made up of three parts, the first indicating the treacherous plot of Ganelon; the second, the attack at Roncevaux—Valley of Thorns; the third, the revenge taken by Charlemagne for the death of his beloved young count, he thereby making himself supreme in Spain. So far as its historical value is concerned, it possesses little, if any. A battle was once fought at Roncevaux and a noble named Roland fell. That is as far as history confirms the story. It is, however, highly valuable for the light it sheds on the ideals of the age, as well as for the incidental interweaving of contemporaneous life—the life of the tenth and eleventh centuries in which it found fullest expression—not that of Charlemagne's own age.

The *Song of Roland* passed into Italy; into England with the Normans; into the Low Countries; into Denmark and Germany; even into Iceland. It became the great national epic of France, lauding the Franks as the champions of Christianity against the Moslems. Next to France, Italy loved it best.

During the Renaissance the minds of men were turned away from their immediate past to classical times; Greek and Latin writings were restored, while whatever pertained to the "Middle Ages" was regarded as Gothic, a term which became a synonym for the barbaric and crude. Only in the nineteenth century has interest once more reverted to the

early centuries of this once despised period and its epics been restored to literature.

“Many another *chanson de geste* tells an heroic tale of old war; that among them all we turn oftenest to the ‘Roland’ is because this had the good fortune to be preserved to us at the happiest moment of its development. It bears the stamp of some good workman who knew how to turn to account the good epic material that came ready to his hand. Singularly free from mediæval digression, . . . it has an effective unity, rare in mediæval stories. Skill there is in its insistence on the more interesting elements of the story, as on the comradeship of Roland and Oliver. Skillful, too, is its use of repetition, the telling over in two or three successive stanzas the same idea in slightly different words. . . . The style, all brevity and directness, save for this repetition, by its very simplicity keeps a certain dignity. The story we are made to feel from the very beginning is a tragedy.”

The tendency to exaggerate is apparent in this poem. Roland’s horn penetrates for thirty leagues; to blow it requires great strength. Mortally wounded, he still wields destruction enough for three men on the assailing foes. Again, knightly ideals are emphasized: it is false pride, so Oliver tells him, to refrain from sounding his horn when immeasurable foes overwhelm him; yet men honored him for attempting to contend with a force so greatly out of proportion to his own. To die for “sweet France” was better than life itself, and to die for both France and Christianity was a boon indeed.

The entire poem should be read. It is available in prose and rhythmical translations. The following citations are taken from the prose rendering of Isabel Butler, whose translation should be in every library. A poetical translation has lately been done by Leonard Bacon.

FROM THE SONG OF ROLAND

GANELON'S TREACHERY

CHARLES the King, our great Emperor, has been for seven long years in Spain; he has conquered all the high land to the sea; not a castle holds out against him, not a wall or city is left unshattered, save Saragossa, which stands high on a mountain. King Marsila holds it, who loves not God, but serves Mahound,^x and worships Apollon,^y ill hap must in sooth befall him. . . .

The Emperor is joyous and glad at heart; he has taken Cordova and overthrown its walls; and with his mangonels he has beaten down its towers. Great was the plunder which fell to his knights in gold and silver and goodly armour. Not a heathen is left in the city; all are either slain or brought to Christianity. The Emperor is in a wide orchard, and with him are Roland, and Oliver, Samson the Duke, and Anseïs the Proud, Geoffrey of Anjou, the King's standard bearer, and thereto are Gerin, and Gerier, and with them is many another man of France to the number of fifteen thousand. Upon the grass are spread cloths of white silk whereon the knights may sit; and some of these play at tables for their delight, but the old and wise play at chess, and the young lords practise the sword-play. Under a pine, beside an eglantine, stands a throne made all of beaten gold; there sits the King who rules sweet France; white is his beard and his head is hoary, his body is well fashioned and his countenance noble; those who seek him have no need to ask which is the King. And the messengers lighted down from their mules and saluted him in all love and friendship.

Blancandrin was the first to speak, and said to the King: "Greeting in the name of God the Glorious whom ye adore. Thus saith to you King Marsila the valiant: much has he enquired into the faith which brings salvation; and now he

would fain give you good store of his substance, bears and lions, and greyhounds in leash, seven hundred camels and a thousand falcons past the moulting time, four hundred mules laden with gold and silver, that ye may carry away fifty full wains of treasure; so many bezants of fine gold shall there be that well may ye reward your men of arms therewith. Long have you tarried in this land, it is meet that ye return again to Aix in France; there my lord will follow you, he gives you his word (and will receive the faith that you hold; with joined hands he will become your man, and will hold from you the kingdom of Spain." At these words the Emperor stretches his two hands towards heaven, and then bows his head and begins to think.

The Emperor sat with bowed head, for he was in no wise hasty of his words, but was ever wont to speak at his leisure. When again he raised his head, proud was his face, and he said to the messengers: "Fairly have ye spoken. Yet King Marsila is much mine enemy. By what token may I set my trust in the words that ye have said?" "By hostages," the Saracen made answer, "of which you shall have or ten or fifteen or twenty. Though it be to death I will send mine own son, and you shall have others, methinks, of yet gentler birth. When you are in your kingly palace at the high feast of Saint Michael of the Peril, my lord will come to you, he gives you his word, and there in the springs that God made flow for you, he would be baptized a Christian." "Yea, even yet he may be saved," Charles made answer.

Fair was the evening and bright the sun. Charles has let stable the ten mules, and in a wide orchard has let pitch a tent wherein the ten messengers are lodged. Ten sergeants make them right good cheer; and there they abide the night through, till the clear dawn. The Emperor has risen early, and heard mass and matins; and now he sits under a pine tree, and calls his barons into council, for he would act in all matters by the advice of those of France.

The Emperor sits under the pine tree and summons his barons to council. Thither came Ogier, and Archbishop Turpin, Richard the Old, with Henry his nephew, and the brave Count Acelin of Gascony, Tedbalt of Rheims and Milon his cousin, and thereto Gerin and Gerier, and with

them came Count Roland, and Oliver the brave, the gentle; of the Franks of France there are more than a thousand, and with the rest came Ganelon who did the treason. And now begins the council that wrought so great woe.

“Lords, barons,” then saith Charles the Emperor, “King Marsila has sent me messengers: he would give me great store of his havings, bears and leashed greyhounds, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, four hundred mules laden with gold of Arabia, more than enough to fill fifty wains; but thereto he charges me that I go back to France, giving his word to come to me at my abiding place at Aix, and there to receive our most holy faith, and to hold his marches of me; but I know not what may be in his heart.” “We must bethink ourselves,” say the Franks in answer.

Now when the Emperor had ceased from speaking, Count Roland, who is in no wise in accord with his words, stands forth and nay-says him. He saith to the King: “It were ill done to set thy trust in Marsila. It is seven full years since we came into Spain, and for you I have conquered Naples and Commibles, and I have taken Valtierra and the land of Pina, and Balaguer and Tudela and Sezilie. Now King Marsila was ever a traitor; aforetime he sent fifteen of his paynims, each bearing an olive branch, and they came unto you with a like tale. Then ye advised with your Franks, who counselled you folly; and you sent two of your counts, Basan and Basil, unto the paynims, and thereafter, below Haltilie, their heads were smitten off. Wherefore I counsel carry on war even as ye have begun it, lead your assembled host unto Saragossa, lay siege to it, even though it be for all the days of your life, and revenge us for those whom the felons slew aforetime.”

The Emperor sat with bent head, he stroked his beard and tugged at his moustache, nor answered he his nephew for either good or ill. The Franks are silent, all save Ganelon, he rises and comes before Charles, and speaks right haughtily, saying to the King: “It were ill done to hearken to a braggart—either me or any other—save that his counsel be to thine own profit. When King Marsila lets tell thee he will do homage to thee as thy vassal, and will hold all

Spain in fief of thee, and thereafter will receive the faith that we hold, he who counsels thee that thou reject this proffer, reckes little, lord, of what death we die. The counsel of pride should not prevail, let us leave folly and hold with the wise."

Thereafter Naymes stood forth—no better vassal was there in all the court—and thus bespoke the King: "Thou hast heard the answer of Ganelon the Count, and wise it is, and it be but heeded. King Marsila is spent with war, thou hast taken his castles, and with thy mangonels hast beaten down his walls, thou hast burned his cities and vanquished his men; when now that he entreats thy mercy, it were sin to press him further, the more that he would give thee surety by hostages. (Now send thou one of thy barons to him.) This great war should have an end." "The Duke hath spoken wisely," cry the Franks.

"Lords, barons, what messenger shall we send to King Marsila at Saragossa?" And Duke Naymes made answer: "By thy leave I will go; give me now the glove and the staff." But the King answered him: "Nay, thou art a man of good counsel, and thou shalt not at this time go thus far from me. Sit thou again in thy place since none hath summoned thee."

"Lords, barons, what messenger shall we send to the Saracen that holds Saragossa?" And Roland made answer: "Right glad were I to go." "Nay certes, not you," saith Count Oliver, "for you are fierce and haughty of temper and I fear lest you embroil yourself; I will go, if the King so wills it." "Peace," the King answered, "nor you nor he shall go thither; and by my beard which thou seest whiten, not one of the Twelve Peers shall be chosen." The Franks answer not, and lo, all are silent.

Turpin of Rheims then stood forth from the rest and bespoke the King, saying: "Let be thy Franks. Seven years hast thou been in this land, and much travail and woe hath been theirs. Give me, lord, the staff and the glove, and I will go to the Saracen of Spain, and learn what manner of man he is." But wrathfully the King made answer: "Sit thou again in thy place upon the white silk and speak not, save as I command thee."

"Ye knights of France," then said Charles the Emperor, "now choose me a baron of my marches who shall do my message to King Marsila." Then saith Roland: "Let it be Ganelon my stepfather." "Yea," say the Franks, "well will he do your errand; if ye pass him by ye will send none so wise."

Then said the King: "Ganelon, come thou hither, and receive the glove and the staff. Thou hast heard thou art chosen of the Franks." "Sir," Ganelon answered him, "it is Roland who has done this thing; never again shall I hold him in my love all the days of my life, nor yet Oliver in that he is his comrade, nor the Twelve Peers in that they hold him dear, and here in thy sight, lord, I defy them." "Thy wrath is over great," then saith the King, "and certes, go thou must in that I command thee." "Go I may, but without surety, none was there for Basil and Basan his brother.

"Well I know I needs must go unto Saragossa, but for him who goes thither there is no return. And more than that, thy sister is my wife, and I have a son, never was there a fairer, and if he lives he will be a man of good prowess. To him I leave my lands and honours; guard him well, for never again shall I see him with these eyes." "Thou art too tender of heart," Charles answered him, "since I command thee, needs must thou go."

And Count Ganelon was in sore wrath thereat; he lets slip from about his neck his great cloak of sables, and stands forth in his tunic of silk. Gray blue are his eyes, and proud his face, well fashioned is he of body, and broad of chest. So comely he is, all his peers turn to look upon him. And he speaks to Roland, saying: "Thou fool, why art thou in so great wrath? It is known of all that I am thy stepfather, and thou hast named me to go unto Marsila. If God grants me to return again I shall bring woe upon thee so great it shall endure all the days of thy life." "Thou speakest pride and folly," Roland answered him, "and all men know I reckon naught of threats. But a man of counsel should bear this message, and if the King wills it, I am ready to go in thy stead."

"Nay," Ganelon made answer, "in my stead thou shalt not go. Thou art not my man, nor am I thy over-lord. Charles has commanded me that I do his errand, and I will go unto Marsila in Saragossa. But mayhap I shall do there some folly to ease me of my great wrath." At these words Roland falls a-laughing.

When Ganelon sees that Roland bemocks him, so great anger is his he is near to bursting with wrath, and he well-nigh goes out of his senses. He saith to the Count: "Little love have I for thee in that thou hast brought false judgment upon me. O just King, lo, I stand before thee, ready to do thy commandment."

The Emperor holds out to him his right glove, but fain had Count Ganelon been elsewhere, and when he should have taken it, he lets it fall to earth. And the Franks cry: "God, what may this betide? Great woe shall come upon us from this enbassage." "Lords," saith Ganelon, "ye shall have tidings thereof.

"And O King," he said again, "I pray thy leave; since go I must, I would not delay." "Go in Jesus' name and in mine," the King made answer. With his right hand he shrove and blessed him, and then he gave him the staff and the letter.

Now Ganelon the Count gets him to his lodging and begins to don his armour, the goodliest he can find; he has fastened spurs of gold upon his feet, and at his side he has girt Murglais his sword; and when he mounted Tachebrun his steed, Guinemer his uncle it was, held his stirrup. Many a knight ye may see weep, and they say to him: "Woe worth the day, baron! Long hast thou been in the King's court; and ever hast thou been accounted a man of worship. He who judged thee to go will be nowise shielded or saved by Charles; Count Roland ought never to have had the thought, *for ye twain are near of kin.*" And they say further: "Lord, we pray thee take us with thee." But Ganelon answers: "No, so help me God! Better it were that I die alone than that so many good knights take their end. Ye will return again into sweet France, lords; greet ye my wife for me, and likewise Pinabel my friend and peer, and aid ye Baldwin my son, whom ye know, and make

him your over-lord." Therewith he set forth and rode on his way.

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Meantime the Emperor has turned back towards his own land, and has come to the city of Valtierra, which aforetime Count Roland had taken, and so destroyed that thenceforward for the space of a hundred years it was waste and desolate. There the King awaits tidings of Ganelon, and the tribute of the great land of Spain. And now on a morning, at dawn, with the first light, comes Ganelon into the camp.

The Emperor had risen early and heard mass and matins; and now he is on the green grass before his tent, and with him is Roland, and Oliver the valiant, Naymes the Duke and many another. Thither comes Ganelon, the felon, the traitor, and with cunning and falsehood speaks to the King, saying: "Blessed be thou of God! I bring thee hereby the keys of Saragossa, and great store of gifts, and twenty hostages—guard thou them well. But King Marsila bids thee blame him not that the Caliph be not among them; with mine own eyes I saw him and four hundred men of arms, clad in hauberks, with helms on head, and girt with swords whose hilts were inlaid with gold, embark together upon the sea. They were fleeing from Christianity which they would not receive or hold. But before they had sailed four leagues, storm and tempest fell upon them, and even there they were drowned, never shall ye see them more. Had the Caliph been alive I had brought him hither. As for the paynim King, in very truth, lord, this month shall not pass but he will come to thee in thy kingdom of France, and will receive the faith that thou holdest, and will join his hands in thine and become thy man, and will hold of thee his kingdom of Spain." Then saith the King: "Thanks be to God therefor. Well hast thou done, and great shall be thy reward." Thereafter he let sound a thousand trumpets throughout the host, and the Franks break up their camp, and load their sumpters, and set forth together towards fair France.

Charles the Great has laid waste all Spain, he has taken its castles and sacked its cities. But now the war is ended,

so saith the King, and he rides on towards fair France. The day passes and evening falls; Count Roland has set the King's standard on the crest of a high hill against the sky; and the Franks pitch their tents in all the country round about. Meantime the paynims ride on through the valleys, clad in their hauberks and two-fold harness, helms on head, and girt with their swords, shields on shoulder, and lances in hand. They made stay in a wood, on the top of the mountains, and there four hundred thousand await the dawn. God, what sorrow the Franks know it not.

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THE BATTLE AT RONCESVALLES

Then Oliver goes up into a high mountain, and looks away to the right, all down a grassy valley, and sees the host of the heathen coming on, and he called to Roland, his comrade, saying: "From the side of Spain I see a great light coming, thousands of white hauberks and thousands of gleaming helms. They will fall upon our Franks with great wrath. Ganelon the felon has done this treason, and he it was adjudged us to the rearguard, before the Emperor." "Peace, Oliver," saith Count Roland, "he is my mother's husband, speak thou no ill of him.

Oliver has fared up the mountain, and from the summit thereof he sees all the kingdom of Spain and the great host of the Saracens. Wondrous is the shine of helmets studded with gold, of shields and broidered hauberks, of lances and gonfanons. The battles are without number, and no man may give count thereof, so great is the multitude. Oliver was all astonied at the sight; he got down the hill as best he might, and came to the Franks, and gave them his tidings.

"I have seen the paynims," said Oliver; "never was so great a multitude seen of living men. Those of the vanguard are upon a hundred thousand, all armed with shields and helmets, and clad in white hauberks; right straight are the shafts of their lances, and bright the points thereof. Such a battle we shall have as was never before seen of man. Ye lords of France, may God give you might! and

stand ye firm that we be not overcome." "Foul fall him who flees!" then say the Franks, "for no peril of death will we fail thee."

"Great is the host of the heathen," saith Oliver, "and few is our fellowship. Roland, fair comrade, I pray thee sound thy horn of ivory that Charles may hear it and return again with all his host." "That were but folly," quoth Roland, "and thereby would I lose all fame in sweet France. Rather will I strike good blows and great with Durendal, that the blade thereof shall be blooded even unto the hilt. Woe worth the paynims that they came into the passes! I pledge thee my faith short life shall be theirs."

"Roland, comrade, blow now thy horn of ivory, and Charles shall hear it, and bring hither his army again, and the King and his barons shall succour us." But Roland answers him, saying: "Now God forfend that through me my kinsman be brought to shame, or aught of dishonour befall fair France. But first I will lay on with Durendal, the good sword that is girded here at my side, and thou shalt see the blade thereof all reddened. Woe worth the paynims when they gathered their hosts! I pledge me they shall all be given over to death."

"Roland, comrade, blow thy horn of ivory, that Charles may hear it as he passes the mountains, and I pledge me the Franks will return hither again." But Roland saith: "Now God forfend it be said of any living man that I sounded my horn for dread of paynims. Nay, that reproach shall never fall upon my kindred. But when I am in the stour I will smite seven hundred blows, or mayhap a thousand, and thou shalt see the blade of Durendal all crimson. The Franks are goodly men, and they will lay on right valiantly, nor shall those of Spain have any surety from death."

Saith Oliver, "I see no shame herein. I have seen the Saracens of Spain, they cover the hills and the valleys, the heaths and the plains. Great are the hosts of this hostile folk, and ours is but a little fellowship." And Roland makes answer: "My desire is the greater thereby. May God and His most holy angels forfend that France should lose aught of worship through me. Liefer had I die than bring dis-

honour upon me. The Emperor loves us for dealing stout blows."

Roland is brave, and Oliver is wise, and both are good men of their hands; once armed and a-horseback, rather would they die than flee the battle. Hardy are the Counts and high their speech. The felon paynims ride on in great wrath. Saith Oliver: "Roland, prithee look. They are close upon us, but Charles is afar off. Thou wouldst not deign to sound thy horn of ivory; but were the King here we should suffer no hurt. Look up towards the passes of Aspre and thou shalt see the woeful rearguard; they who are of it will do no more service henceforth." But Roland answers him: "Speak not so cowardly. Cursed be the heart that turns coward in the breast! Hold we the field, and ours be the buffets and the slaughter."

When Roland sees that the battle is close upon them he waxes fiercer than lion or leopard. He calls to the Franks, and he saith to Oliver: "Comrade, friend, say not so. When the Emperor left us his Franks he set apart such a twenty thousand of men that, certes, among them is no coward. For his liege lord a man ought to suffer all hardship, and endure great heat and great cold, and give both his blood and his body. Lay on with thy lance, and I will smite with Durendal, my good sword that the King gave me. If I die here, may he to whom it shall fall, say, 'This was the sword of goodly vassal.'"

Nigh at hand is Archbishop Turpin; he now spurs his horse to the crest of a knoll, and speaks to the Franks, and this is his sermon: "Lords, barons, Charles left us here, and it is a man's devoir to die for his King. Now help ye to uphold Christianity. Certes, ye shall have a battle, for here before you are the Saracens. Confess your sins and pray God's mercy, and that your souls may be saved I will absolve you. If ye are slain ye will be holy martyrs, and ye shall have seats in the higher Paradise." The Franks light off their horses and kneel down, and the Archbishop blesses them, and for a penance bids them that they lay on with their swords.

The Franks get upon their feet, freed and absolved from sin; and the Archbishop blesses them in the name of God.

Then they mounted their swift horses, and armed themselves after the manner of knights, and made them ready for battle. Count Roland calls to Oliver, saying: "Sir comrade, rightly thou saidst Ganelon hath betrayed us all, and hath received gold and silver and goods therefor; but the Emperor will well revenge us. King Marsila hath bought and sold us, but he shall pay for it with the sword."

Roland rides through the passes of Spain on Veillantif, his good horse and swift. He is clad in his harness, right well it becomes him, and as he rides he brandishes his spear, turning its point towards heaven; and to its top is bound a gonfanon of pure white, whereof the golden fringes fall down even unto his hands. Well fashioned is his body, and his face fair and laughing; close behind him rides his comrade; and all the Franks claim him as their champion. Full haughtily he looks on the Saracens, but gently and mildly on the Franks, and he speaks to them courteously, saying: "Lords, barons, ride on softly. The paynims come seeking destruction, and this day we shall have plunder so goodly and great that no King of France hath ever taken any of so great price." At these words the two hosts come together.

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Dread and sore is the battle. Roland and Oliver lay on valiantly, and the Archbishop deals more than a thousand buffets, nor are the Twelve Peers backward, and all the Franks smite as a man. The Paynims are slain by hundreds and thousands, whosoever does not flee has no surety from death, but will he, nill he, must take his end. But the Franks lose their goodliest arms; [lances adorned with gold, and trenchant spears, and gonfanons red and white and blue, and the blades of their good swords are broken, and thereto they lose many a valiant knight.] Never again shall they see father or kindred, or Charles their liege lord who abides for them in the passes.

Meantime, in France, a wondrous tempest broke forth, a mighty storm of wind and lightning, with rain and hail out of all measure, and bolts of thunder that fell ever and again; and verily therewith came a quaking of the earth that ran through all the land from Saint Michael of the

Peril, even unto *Xanten*, and from *Besançon* to the port of *Guitsand*; and there was not a dwelling whose walls were not rend asunder. And at noon fell a shadow of great darkness, nor was there any light save as the heavens opened. They that saw these things were sore afraid, and many a one said: "This is the day of judgment and the end of the world is at hand." But they were deceived, and knew not whereof they spoke; it was the great mourning for the death of Roland.

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Would ye had seen Roland and Oliver hack and hew with their swords, and the Archbishop smite with his lance. We can reckon those that fell by their hands for the number thereof is written in charter and record; the *Geste* says more than four thousand. In four encounters all went well with the Franks, but the fifth was sore and grievous to them, for in this all their knights were slain save only sixty, spared by God's mercy. Before they die they will sell their lives dear.

When Count Roland is ware of the great slaughter of his men, he turns to Oliver, saying: "Sir comrade, as God may save thee, see how many a good man of arms lies on the ground; we may well have pity on sweet France, the fair, that must now be desolate of such barons. Ah, King and friend, would thou wert here! Oliver, my brother, what shall we do? How shall we send him tidings?" "Nay, I know not how to seek him," saith Oliver; "but liefer had I die than bring dishonour upon me."

Then saith Roland: "I will sound my horn of ivory, and Charles, as he passes the mountains, will hear it; and I pledge thee my faith the Franks will return again." Then saith Oliver: "Therein would be great shame for thee, and dishonour for all thy kindred, a reproach that would last all the days of their life. Thou wouldst not sound it when I bid thee, and now thou shalt not by my counsel. And if thou dost sound it, it will not be hardily, for now both thy arms are stained with blood." "Yea," the Count answers him, "I have dealt some goodly blows."

Then saith Roland: "Sore is our battle, I will blow a

blast, and Charles the King will hear it." "That would not be knightly," said Oliver; "When I bid thee, comrade, thou didst disdain it. Had the King been here, we had not suffered this damage; but they who are afar off are free from all reproach. By this my beard, an I see again my sister, Aude the Fair, never shalt thou lie in her arms."

Then saith Roland: "Wherefore art thou wroth with me?" And Oliver answers him, saying: "Comrade, thou thyself art to blame. Wise courage is not madness, and measure is better than rashness. Through thy folly these Franks have come to their death; nevermore shall Charles the King have service at our hands. Hadst thou taken my counsel, my liege lord had been here, and this battle had been ended, and King Marsila had been or taken or slain. Woe worth thy prowess, Roland! Henceforth Charles shall get no help of thee; never till God's Judgment Day shall there be such another man; but thou must die, and France shall be shamed thereby. And this day our loyal fellowship shall have an end; before this evening grievously shall we be parted."

The Archbishop, hearing them dispute together, spurs his horse with his spurs of pure gold, and comes unto them, and rebukes them, saying: "Sir Roland, and thou, Sir Oliver, in God's name I pray ye, let be this strife. Little help shall we now have of thy horn; and yet it were better to sound it; if the King come, he will revenge us, and the paynims shall not go hence rejoicing. Our Franks will light off their horses, and find us dead and maimed, and they will lay us on biers, on the backs of sumpters, and will weep for us with dole and pity; and they will bury us in the courts of churches, that our bones may not be eaten by wolves and swine and dogs." "Sir, thou speakest well and truly," quoth Roland.

And therewith he sets his ivory horn to his lips, grasps it well and blows it with all the might he hath. High are the hills, and the sound echoes far, and for thirty full leagues they hear it resound. Charles and all his host hear it, and the King saith: "Our men are at battle." But Count Ganelon denies it, saying: "Had any other said so, we had deemed it great falsehood."

With dolour and pain, and in sore torment, Count Roland blows his horn of ivory, that the bright blood springs out of his mouth, and the temples of his brain are broken. Mighty is the blast of the horn, and Charles, passing the mountains, hears it, and Naymes hears it, and all the Franks listen and hear. Then saith the King: "I hear the horn of Roland; never would he sound it, an he were not at battle." But Ganelon answers him, saying: "Battle is there none; thou art old and white and hoary, and thy words are those of a child. Well thou knowest the great pride of Roland;—a marvel it is that God hath suffered it thus long. Aforetime he took Naples against thy commandment, and when the Saracens came out of the city and set upon Roland the good knight, (he slew them with Durendal his sword;) thereafter with water he washed away the blood which stained the meadow, that none might know of what he had done. And for a single hare he will blow his horn all day long; and now he but boasts among his fellows, for there is no folk on earth would dare do him battle. I prithee ride on. Why tarry we? The Great Land still lies far before us."

Count Roland's mouth has burst out a-bleeding, and the temples of his brain are broken. In dolour and pain he sounds his horn of ivory; but Charles hears it and the Franks hear it. Saith the King: "Long drawn is the blast of that horn." "Yea," Naymes answers, "for in sore need is the baron who blows it. Certes, our men are at battle; and he who now dissembles hath betrayed Roland. Take your arms and cry your war-cry, and succour the men of your house. Dost thou not hear Roland's call?"

The Emperor has commanded that his trumpets be sounded, and now the Franks light down from their horses and arm themselves with hauberks and helms and swords adorned with gold; fair are their shields, and goodly and great their lances, and their gonfanons are scarlet and white and blue. Then all the barons of the host get them to horse, and spur through the passes; and each saith to other: "An we may but see Roland a living man, we will strike good blows at his side." But what avails it? for they have abode too long.

Clear is the evening as was the day, and all their armour glistens in the sun, and there is great shining of hauberks, and helms, and shields painted with flowers, and lances, and gilded gonfanons. The Emperor rides on in wrath, and the Franks are full of care and foreboding; and not a man but weeps full sore and hath great fear for Roland. Then the King let take Count Ganelon, and gave him over to the cooks of his household; and he called Besgon their chief, saying: "Guard him well, as beseems a felon who hath betrayed my house." Besgon took him, and set a watch about him of a hundred of his fellows of the kitchen, both best and worst.

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THE VENGEANCE OF CHARLES

Dead is Roland, God in heaven has his soul.

The Emperor has come into Roncesvalles. There is no road, nor path, nor open space of land, though it be but the width of an ell or the breadth of a foot, that is not strewn with Franks or paynims. And Charles cries out: "Where art thou, fair nephew? Where is Count Oliver, and where the Archbishop? Where is Gerin, and Gerier his comrade? Where is Oton the Duke, and Count Berengier, and Ivon and Ivory whom I hold so dear? What has befallen Engelier the Gascon, Samson the Duke, and Anseïs the Proud? Where is Gerard the Old of Rousillon? Where are the Twelve Peers that I left behind me?" But what avails his call since no one gives answer? "O God," saith the King, "much it weighs on me that I was not here to begin the onset." And he plucks at his beard even as a man in wrath. His knights and barons weep, and twenty thousand fall swooning to the ground; great is the sorrow of Naymes the Duke.

[Mighty is the woe at Roncesvalles.] There is no knight or baron but weeps right sore for pity. They weep for their sons and brothers and nephews, and for their friends, and for their liege lords; many a one falls swooning to the ground. But Duke Naymes bears him like a man of valour, he is the first to bespeak the Emperor, saying: "Look two leagues before us, where on the dusty highroad fares the

throng of the paynim folk. I prithee ride on and revenge this woe." "Ah, God," saith Charles, "already are they far from us. Now grant me justice and honour. They have taken from me the flower of sweet France."

Then the King commands Gebuin and Odo, Tedbalt of Rheims and Count Milon, saying: "Guard ye this field, the valleys and the mountains; let the dead lie even as they are, let not the lions or any wild beast come nigh them, neither the sergeants nor the varlets, let not any man lay hands on them, until God grants us to return to this field."

And they answered him gently in their love: "Just Emperor, dear lord, even so will we do." And they keep with them a thousand of their knights.

The Emperor bids the trumpets be sounded, and then he rides on with his great host. They have found the traces of those of Spain, and they pursue after them, and all are of one mind. And when the King sees the night coming on, he dismounts in a meadow of green grass, and casts himself upon the ground, and prays to the Lord God that he make the sun to stand still for him, the darkness to delay and the light to abide. And an angel that was wont to speak to him straightway commanded him, saying: "Charles, mount thy horse, and the light shall not fail thee. Thou hast lost the flower of France, and this God knows; it is granted thee to revenge thyself upon this guilty folk." At these words the Emperor gets him to horse.

For Charles God has wrought a great wonder; and the sun is stayed in the heavens. The heathen flee, and fiercely the Franks pursue them; in Val Tenebres they come upon them; and with their swords they drive them towards Saragossa, and slay them as they go with great slaughter; and they cut them off from the roads and the footways. The stream of the Ebro is before them, deep it is, and swift and terrible, and there is neither ferry nor barge nor dromond. The paynims call upon their god Tervagant; then they leap into the stream, but find no safety. The armed knights are the heaviest, and some among them sink to the bottom, others are swept along by the current, and even those who fare best drink deep of the water; all alike

are miserably drowned. And the Franks cry to them, saying: "Woe worth the day ye saw Roland!"

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The Emperor has returned from Spain, and come again to Aix, the fairest seat in France; he has gone up into his palace and has passed into the hall. To him comes Aude, that fair damsel, and saith to the King: "Where is Roland, the captain, who pledged him to take me as his wife?" Thereat Charles is filled with dolour and grief, he weeps and plucks his white beard, saying: "Sister, sweet friend, thou askest me of one who is dead. But I will make good thy loss to thee, and will give thee Louis—a better I cannot name—my son he is, and will hold my marches." "Lord, thy words are strange to me," Aude makes answer. "May it not please God or his saints or his angels that after Roland's death I should yet live." She loses her colour and falls at the feet of Charles, and lo, she is dead. God have mercy upon her soul. The Barons of France weep and lament her.

Aude the Fair has gone to her end. But the King thinks her in a swoon, he is full of pity for her, and he weeps; he takes her by the hands and raises her up, but her head falls back upon her shoulders. When Charles sees that she is dead, he straightway calls four countesses; Aude is borne to a convent of nuns hard by, and they watch by her the night through till dawn. Richly and fairly they bury her beside an altar, and the King does her great honour.*

x Mahomet.

y Apollo.

* Isabel Butler's Trans.

BEOWULF

MOST ancient of all poems surviving from early Teutonic tribes is the one which sings the praises of Beowulf, a single priceless manuscript of it having alone escaped the ravages of time. Even this was somewhat injured by a fire in the eighteenth century. It is now carefully guarded as one of the rare treasures of the British Museum.

While the date of this parchment has been long debated, it is generally conceded to belong to the close of the tenth or first years of the eleventh centuries, somewhere around the year 1000 A. D. The story itself is far older and was composed by the Vikings before they left their home in Europe for the isle of Britain. Indeed, it is safe to say that instead of being two hundred years older than the copy, as is often stated, the tales grouped together in this single epic may have been handed down by word of mouth for many centuries before they were ever committed to writing. The manuscript bears evidence of having been done by two different penmen, presumably monks. It has been conjectured that the first, more painstaking, writing a more legible hand, may have died before his task was ended, the poem being completed by another less enlightened. These conjectures though perhaps wide of the mark, have been offered, it being evident that such details can never be established.

The story is set back in the days when either the Jutes or Goths dwelt in southern Sweden and the Danes occupied their present peninsula. The first are called *Geats*; the latter, *Scyldings*. These are ruled by Hrothgar, proudly tracing his ancestry back to Skeaf, who came mysteriously to their country some generations before at a time while the throne was vacant. Set adrift in a boat, surrounded by valuable vessels, weapons and treasure, the infant drifted to

their very shores. The people saw the hand of fate in his timely arrival and made him their ruler. Hrothgar was in direct line of descent. He, like his aggressive forebear, was a competent ruler and had extended his borders. Now, in his later years, he is shown as having amassed much wealth and surrounded by loyal subjects. In order that he and his valiant warriors may enjoy the long winter nights in a northern land of prolonged darkness, he built a great hall, Heorot, "of festal halls the brightest and the best;" with a glowing hearth in the center, along its sides, long tables for his bodyguard and thanes who gather around their king. In this hall the warriors throw themselves down upon the floor to enjoy the slumber induced by heavy draughts of mead, or wine. At the feast the king and queen sit upon the dais, in the midst of Heorot, their guests at a table opposite.

Not long were they left to rejoice in the simple joys of heavily laden tables, plenteous mead, chants of the scalds, or bards, and general cheer of the hospitable hall. While the king's bodyguard slept at night, a dire monster from the marshes stole stealthily to Heorot and killed the sleeping warriors. Mourning soon replaced gladness in the king's regal hall. Nothing daunted, ten brave men offered to watch at night and slay the giant, thus to avenge their companions' death and restore safety to the king's festal palace. Next morning found them, like the others, slain. Now it became difficult to induce men to frequent such a dangerous place. The trembling minstrel who from his hiding place had witnessed the slaughter of the ten braves paused only to relate what he had seen and fled away to the land of the Geats, to sing to King Hygelac the trouble that beset Hrothgar's kingdom. Among those who listened to his lay was one Beowulf, the king's nephew, a young warrior whose courage and readiness to encounter danger had already won him renown. He determined at once to go to the aid of the aged Hrothgar and rid his land of the monster Grendel.

Arriving, Beowulf is welcomed by Hrothgar, who listens to his past exploits, these indicating his ability to grapple with still deadlier foes; having feasted him and besought

him to forego such grave danger, the old king sadly leaves him and his few chosen companions, fearful that he shall see them no more. While the companions yield to slumber, Beowulf keeps watch and finally the door is opened as the heavy bolts yield to the giant's touch. Enveloped in a fog or mist, Grendel stalks into the festal hall, seeking whom he may devour. One dies under his deadly grasp; then his arm is caught in a vicelike grip and pull as he will, he cannot loose it. At last, after tables have been upturned as they struggle, Beowulf wrenches the massive member from Grendel's body and the wounded creature retreats from the place with howls of anguish.

Next morning joy fills the land; Beowulf is fêted and praised; no gifts are too costly to shower upon him; he and his companions are heralded as saviours of the kingdom. The beautiful queen personally presents the hero with a goodly necklace and a ring in token of her gratitude. Alas, their feeling of safety is shortlived! While Beowulf sleeps in private quarters the following night and Hrothgar's soldiers again occupy Heorot, Grendel's mother comes to secure the severed arm of her son and to avenge his death by selecting the king's bosom friend as her victim. Sorrow replaces joy when his loss is known. Once more Beowulf springs to action, trailing the demon to its den by the line of blood, which leads at length into the sea, at the bottom of which is the stronghold of Grendel, dying of his fatal wound. Compelled to fight numerous creatures that seek to deter him in his journey to the depths of the ocean, Beowulf reaches the monster's den, killing both him and his mother. Although his own life had been despaired by those who waited, Beowulf succeeded in reaching Heorot with the heads of the monsters he had overcome.

Amid scenes of gladness, laden with precious gifts, he and his companions return to their ship and take their course back to the kingdom of the Geats. For half a century Beowulf is absorbed with the problems that confront his native land—an invasion of the Swedes, the protection of an infant king until death removes him and Beowulf is himself hailed as king.

At last, in his declining years, a new terror manifests: a

demon in the mountains, angered by the loss of treasure, begins to spread fire on every side. It falls to Beowulf once more to rid his country of so alarming a danger. This he accomplishes but in so doing receives a death wound. Bidding his companions let him behold the riches which he has released in the mountain for his people, the great hero dies and is accorded the imposing burial that was customary for Viking chiefs, while a mighty tomb is built high upon a boulder so that men might know for ages to come of the fearless heart and strong arm of Beowulf.

Primitive people love tales of courage and valiant fighting; a stage of hero-worship has been common to all nations at some stage of development. Just as the Greeks were thrilled by the story of Achilles, Agamemnon and his "long haired Achæans," and the Hebrews found the feats of Samson pleasing to their ears, so the Norsemen were inspired by the exploits of Beowulf. Certain critics voice a regret that his strong arm was not called into action for more practical causes than contending with giants. Such comment reveals lack of appreciation of the situation. In the first place, it should never be forgotten that old legends and traditions contained threads that were almost as old as thinking humanity. Science has demonstrated that many creatures now extinct once stalked the earth. Many a tale of monsters and supposedly fabulous creatures is but the residue of descriptions given by remote man to his children's children and transmitted for centuries, possibly for millenniums, by word of mouth. Again, in marshy places, in antiquity, vapors and fogs carried death as surely as the most ferocious monster. It is highly probable that pestilence carried off people whose demise was so slightly comprehended that it seemed as though some demon must have strangled them. Finally, feats of strength and courage were admired above all else. Each scald sang his own version of the heroic actions which tradition preserved. After the flight of centuries it was inevitable that disease-breeding fogs, half forgotten tales of animals becoming rarer and less frequently seen, cavemen who had not yielded to even a crude civilization, should all have become woven into the songs, like the unnumbered threads of a tapestry. That a

volcanic eruption should have been attributed to the removal of ore from the veins of the mountain is what might be expected of people who, though possessed of bodily strength, looked out upon the world with the minds of children. That they believed that a king who had rid them of many dangers would be able to cope even with earthquakes and volcanoes is highly probable.

The tales of primitive people are not studied in order that we may emulate the deeds of their heroes, but that we may understand the conceptions of those who loved them and gain an insight into their customs and modes of living. Like other poems of the early Middle Ages, a poetical sense was given to *Beowulf* by alliteration and by the rising and falling measure, it being sung or chanted. The phraseology is often itself poetical: the *sea* is the *swan's path*; sometimes it is the *whale's road*. The volcano is the *fire-darter*.

It is rare good fortune that this fragile parchment, accidentally preserved, spared from the flames with scorched margins, thus brings before us the stalwart old seamen of the north who set forth in their ships with prows carved in forbidding shapes, to inspire fear in the hearts of their enemies. That it sings of blood, death-dealing blows, crude joys, highly prized armour and weapons, carefully preserved vessels, and other objects which embraced the wealth of the times, is to be expected. Several translations have been made of *Beowulf*; the following citations are taken from the prose rendering by Earle; several have been made in verse—one by William Morris, one recently by Leonard Bacon, who even presents a chart of Heorot Hall as he conceives it to have been arranged.

Some patience and attention are doubtless necessary to read the poem understandingly. That the effort is well worth while, all who become familiar with it will attest.

FROM BEOWULF

TO Hrothgar was given martial spirit, warlike ambition; insomuch that his cousins gladly took him for leader, until the young generation grew up, a mighty regiment of clansmen. Into his mind it came, that he would give orders for men to construct a hall-building, a great mead-house, (greater) than the children of men had ever heard tell of; and that therewithin he would freely deal out to young and old what God should give him, save people's land and lives of men.

. . . His plan was in good time accomplished, with a quickness surprising to men; so that it was all ready, the greatest of all hall-buildings. He gave it the name of Heorot, he who with his word had wide dominion. He belied not his announcement;—rings he distributed, treasure at the banquet. The hall towered aloft, high and with pinnacles spanning the air; awaited the scathing blasts of destructive flame. No appearance was there as yet of knife-hatred starting up between son-in-law and father-in-law in revenge of blood.

Then the outcast creature, he who dwelt in darkness, with torture for a time endured that he heard joyance day by day, loud sounding in hall; there was the swough of the harp, the ringing song of the minstrel.

Said one who was skilled to narrate from remote time the primæval condition of men; quoth he—"The Almighty made the earth, the country radiant with beauty, all that water surroundeth, delighting in magnificence. He ordained Sun and Moon, luminaries for light to the dwellers on earth, and adorned the rustic regions with branches and leaves; life also he created for all the kinds that live and move."

Thus they, the warrior-band, in joyance lived and full delight;—until that one began to work atrocity, a fiend in the hall. The grim visitant was called Grendel, the dread

mark-ranger, he who haunted moors, fen and fastness:—the unblessed man had long time kept the abode of monsters, ever since the Creator had prescribed them. On Cain's posterity did the eternal Lord wreak that slaughter, for that he slew Abel. He profited not by that violence; but He banished him far away, the Maker for that crime banished him from mankind. From that origin all strange broods awoke, jotuns and elves and ogres, as well as giants who warred against God long time;—He repaid them due retribution.

He set out then as soon as night was come, to explore the lofty house; how the mailèd Danes had after carousal bestowed themselves in it. So he found therein a princely troop sleeping after feast; they knew not sorrow, desolation of men. The baleful wight, grim and greedy, was ready straight, fierce and furious, and in their sleep he seized thirty of the thanes; thence hied him back, yelling over his prey, to go to his home with the war-spoils, and reach his habitation. Then was in the dawning and with early day the war-craft of Grendel plain to the grooms; then was upraised after festivity the voice of weeping, a great cry in the morning. The illustrious ruler, the honoured prince, sat woebegone; majestic rage he tholed, he endured sorrow for his thanes:—since they had surveyed the track of the monster, of the accursed goblin;—that contest was too severe, horrible, and prolonged. It was not a longer space, but the interval of one night, that he again perpetrated a huger carnage; and he recked not of it—outrage and atrocity; he was too fixed in those things. Then was it not hard to find some who sought a resting-place elsewhere more at large, a bed among the castle-bowers, when to them was manifested and plainly declared by conspicuous proof the malice of the hell-thane;—whoever had once escaped the fiend did from thenceforward hold himself farther aloof and closer. So domineered and nefariously warred he single against them all, until that the best of houses stood empty. The time was long; twelve winters' space did the Friend of the Scyldings suffer indignity, woes of every kind, unbounded sorrows; and so in process of time it became openly known to the sons of men through ballads

in lamentable wise, that Grendel warred continually against Hrothgar; he waged malignant hostilities, violence and feud, many seasons, unremitting strife; he would not have peace with any man of the Danish power, or remove the life-bale, or compound for tribute; nor could any of the senators expect worthy compensation at the hands of the destroyer; the foul ruffian, a dark shadow of death, was pursuing the venerable and the youthful alike. He prowled about and lay in wait; at nights he continually held the misty moors;—men do not know in what direction hell's agents move in their rounds.

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Hrothgar, crown of Scyldings, uttered speech: "For pledged rescue thou, Beowulf my friend, and at honour's call, hast come to visit us. . . .

"It is a sorrow for me in my soul to tell to any mortal man what humiliation, what horrors, Grendel hath brought upon me in Heorot with his malignant stratagems. My hall-troop, my warrior band, is reduced to nothing; Wyrd hath swept them away in the hideous visitation of Grendel. God unquestionably can arrest the fell destroyer in his doings.

"Full oft they boasted when refreshed with beer, troop-fellows over the ale-can, that they in the beer-hall would receive Grendel's onset with clash of swords. Then was this mead-hall at morning-tide, this royal saloon bespattered with gore, at blush of dawn, all the bench-timber was reeking with blood, the hall with deadly gore; so much the less owned I of trusty lieges, of dear nobility, when death had taken those away.

"Sit now to banquet, and merrily share the feast, brave captain, with (thy) fellows, as thy mind moves thee."

Then was there for the Goth-men all together, in the beer-hall, a table cleared; there the resolute men went to sit in the pride of their strength. Athane attended to the service; one who bore in his hand a decorated ale-can; he poured forth the sheer nectar. At times a minstrel sang, clear-voiced in Heorot; there was social merriment, a brave company of Danes and Wederas.

Then came Grendel marching from the moor under the misty brows; he bore the wrath of God. The assassin meant to catch some one of human-kind in that lofty hall; he tore along under heaven in the direction where he knew the hospitable building, the gold-hall of men, metal-spangled, ever ready for his entertainment;—that was not the first time he had visited Hrothgar's homestead. Never had he in his life-days, earlier or later, met so tough a warrior, such hall-guards!

Came then journeying to the hall the felon mirth-bereft; suddenly the door, fastened with bars of wrought iron, sprang open as he touched it with his hands; thus bale-minded and big with rage he wrecked the vestibule of the hall. Quickly after that the fiend was treading on the paven floor; he went ravening; out of his eyes there stood likeliest to flame an eerie light. He perceived in the hall many warriors, a troop of kinsmen, grouped together, a band of cousins, asleep. Then was his mood exalted to laughter; he counted, the fell ruffian, that he should sever, ere day came, the life of each one of them from his body, seeing that luck had favoured him to gratify his slaughterous appetite. That was not however so destined, that he should be permitted to eat any more of mankind after that night. Mighty rage the kinsman of Hygelac curbed, considering how the assassin meant to proceed in the course of his ravenings. Nor was the marauder minded to delay it; but he seized promptly at his first move a sleeping warrior, tore him in a moment, crunched the bony frame, drank blood of veins, swallowed huge morsels; in a trice he had devoured the lifeless body, feet, hands, and all. He stepped up nearer forward; he was then taking with his hand the great-hearted warrior on his bed. The fiend reached towards him with his fang;—he promptly seized with shrewd design and grappled his arm. Quickly did the boss of horrors discover that, that never in all the world, all the quarters of the earth, had he met man more strange with bigger hand-grip; he in mood became alarmed in spirit; but never the quicker could he get away. His mind was to be going; he wanted to flee into darkness; rejoin the devils' pack; his entertainment there was not such as he

before had met with in bygone days. Then did the brave kinsman of Hygelac remember his discourse of the evening; up he stood full length, and grappled with him amain; his fingers cracked as they would burst. The monster was making off, the eorl followed him up. The oaf was minded, if so be he might, to fling himself loose, and away therefrom to flee into fen-hollows; he knew that the control of his fingers was in the grip of a terrible foe; that was a rash expedition which the devastator had made to Heorot!

The Guard-hall roared;—upon all the Danes, upon the inhabitants of the castle, upon every brave man, upon the eorlas, came mortal panic. Furious were both the maddened champions, the building resounded; it was a great wonder that the genial saloon endured the combatants, that it did not fall to ground, that fair ornament of the country; only that it was inwardly and outwardly so firmly be-smithied with iron staunchions of masterly skill! There, from the sill started—as my story tells—many a mead-bench adorned with gold, where the terrible ones contended. Thereanent had the Scylding senators weened at the first, that never would any man by mortal force be able to wreck it, the beautiful and ivoried house, or by craft to disjoint it;—leastwise fire's embrace should swallow it up in vapoury reek.

The noise rose high, with renewed violence; the north-Danes were stricken with eldritch horror every one, who-soever heard even out on the wall the doleful cry, the adversary of God yelling a dismal lay, a song unvictorious:—the thral of hell howling for his wound. He held him too fast, he who was in main the strongest of men in the day of his life.

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Spake then the lady of the Scyldings:—“Receive this beaker, sovereign mine, wealth-dispenser; be thou merry, a munificent friend of men, and speak to the Goths with comfortable words. So it behooves one to do! Near and far, thou now hast peace! To me it hath been said, that thou wouldest have the hero for thy son. Heorot is purged, the bright ring-hall; dispense whilst thou mayest many

bounties;—and to thy children leave folk and realm, when thou must away to see Eternity. I know my gracious Hrothulf that he will honourably govern the younger ones, if thou earlier than he, O friend of the Scyldings, quittest the world. I think that he will repay our children with good, if he that fully remembers, what gracious attentions thou and I bestowed for his comfort and advantage in the time past when he was an infant.” She turned then towards the bench where her boys were, Hréthric and Hróthmund, and the sons of mighty men, the youth all together; there the brave man sate, Beowulf of the Goths, by the two brothers.

To him the cup was borne; and friendly invitation (to drink) was offered with words; and twisted gold was graciously presented, armlets two, a mantle and rings; the grandest of carcanets that I have heard of on earth. None superior among the treasures of men heard I ever of under heaven, since Hama bore away to the bright fortress the necklace of the Brisings—jewel and casket; he fled the toils of Eormanic; chose eternal counsel.

That collar had Hygelaë of the Goths, grandson (or nephew) of Swerting, on his latest expedition, when under his flag he defended his prize, guarded the spoil; him Fate took off, when he for wantonness challenged woe, feud with the Frisians; he carried that decoration, the costly stones over the wave-bowl, the mighty chieftain: he fell shield in hand; so then came into the power of the Franks the corpse of the king, the breast apparel, and the collar along with the rest: inferior combatants stripped the slain by the fortune of war; the people of the Goths tenanted the bed of death.—The Hall echoed with sound (of Music).

Wealththeo uttered speech; she spake before that company: “Brook this collar, Beowulf, beloved youth, with luck, and make use of this mantle; stately possessions; and prosper well; make thyself famous by valour, and to these boys be thou a kind adviser! I will reward thee for it. Thou hast attained, that far and near, for all future time, men will celebrate thee, even as widely as the sea encircleth windy walls. Be thou, whilst thou live, a happy prince! With good will I accord thee precious possessions. Be thou to my son loyal with deeds, sustaining joyance. Here is

each warrior to other true, kindly disposed, loyal to their chief; the thanes are obedient, the people all ready! Retainers be merry, do as I bid you."

She went then to her chair. There was high festivity; men drank wine, Wyrd they knew not, the cruel destiny, as it had gone forth, for many a noble. Bye and bye the evening came, and Hrothgar betook him to his lodge, the prince to his repose.

Countless nobles guarded the Hall, as they had often done in earlier time: they cleared away the bench-boards; it was strewn throughout with beds and bolsters. One of the revellers, whose end was near, lay down to rest in hall a doomed man. At their heads they set the shields, the bright bucklers; there on the bench was over each etheling, plain to be seen, the towering war-helmet, the ringéd mail-coat, the shaft of awful power. Their custom was that they were constantly ready for war, whether at home or in the field, in both cases alike, whatever the occasion on which their liege lord had need of their services;—it was a good people.

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Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech: "Sorrow not experienced Sire! better is it for every man that he should avenge his friend, than that he should greatly mourn. Every one of us must look for the end of worldly life; he who has the chance should achieve renown before death; that is for a mighty man, when life is past, the best memorial. Rouse thee, guardian of the kingdom! let us promptly set forth to explore the route of Grendel's kin. I vow it to thee; he shall by no means escape to covert; neither in the bowels of the earth, nor in the haunted wood, nor in ocean's depth—go where he will! This day have thou patience of all thy woes, as I have high confidence in thy behalf."

Up sprang then the aged (king); he thanked God, the mighty Lord, for what that man had spoken. Then Hrothgar's horse was bridled, the crull-maned charger. The wise monarch rode forth stately; the foot-force marched, of shield-bearing men. Traces there were broadly visible along the slopes of the weald, the track (of the foe)

over the grounds; right forward (the warlock) had gone, over the murky moor, it had carried off, lifeless, the most beloved of kindred thanes, of those who kept home with Hrothgar.

Then did the Scion of ethelings pass lightly over steep stone-banks, narrow gullies, strait lonesome paths, an untravelled route, sheer bluffs, many habitations of nicors. He with few companions, practised men, went forward to explore the ground, until that he of a sudden perceived the gloomy trees overhanging the grisly rock, a joyless wood; beneath it was a standing water, dreary and troubled. All the Danes, all the friends of the Scyldings, had a shock of feeling, many athane had to suffer; horror seized each warrior, when on that lake-cliff they came across the head of Æschere. The pool seethed with blood—the folk beheld it—with hot gore.

The horn sounded from time to time a spirited bugle-blast. The troop all sate them down; there saw they along the water many things of serpent kind, monstrous sea-snakes at their swimming gambols; and likewise on the jutting slopes nicors lying, those that in the early hours of morning often procure disastrous going on the sailroad; dragons and strange beasts:—they tumbled away, spitish and rage-blown; they had caught sound of the racket; the clarion's clang. The Leed of the Goths with an arrow out of his bow detached one of them from life, and from all future swimming matches; insomuch that in his vitals stood fixed the inexorable war-shaft; he in the element was the slacker at swimming, from the circumstance that death had caught him. Promptly was he on the waves with boar-poles harpoon-armed, tightly nipped—barred of his tricks—and landed on the point, the prodigious wave-tosser;—the men beheld the grisly goblin.

Beowulf geared himself in a knightly armour; in no wise was he anxious for his life; now must the war-byrnie, hand-woven, spacious and decorated, make trial of swimming; the byrnie which knew to protect the body, that his breast, his life, might not be scathed by the grip of battle, the spiteful clutch of the furious one. Moreover the white helmet guarded his head, the helmet that was to plunge into the

depths of the pool, to face buffeting waters, with all its decoration of silver, encircled with princely wreathings, as a weapon-smith in ancient days wrought it, wonderfully executed it, set it round with boar figures, so that never might brand nor war-blades make any impression upon it.

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Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech:— “Now we sea-voyagers wish to say, we who have come from far, that we are purposing to go to Hygelac. Here we have been well entertained to our satisfaction; thou hast been to us very generous. If I therefore may by any means upon earth undertake for thy further gratification, O Captain of men, labours of war beyond what I have yet done, I shall be ready promptly. If they bring me word over the circuit of the floods that neighbours press thee with alarm as whilome thy haters did, I will bring thee a thousand thanes, warriors to help thee. I can undertake for Hygelac, captain of the Goths, young though he be, shepherd of people, that he will forward me by words and by works, so that I may do high service to thee, and for thy support bring a forest of spears, a mighty subsidy, when thou shalt have need of men:—if moreover Hrethric, princely child, is in treaty for admission at the courts of the Goths, he may there find many friends; foreign countries are best visited by him who is of high worth in himself.”

Hrothgar bespake him in answer, “These considerate words hath the Allwise Lord put into thy mind; never heard I a man so young in life speak more to purpose; thou art strong in might and ripe in understanding; wise in discourse of speech. I count it likely, if it cometh to pass that the spear, the grim dispatch of battle, taketh away Hrethel’s offspring, if ailing or iron taketh thy chieftain, the shepherd of the people, and thou hast thy life, that the sea-faring Goths have not any thy better to choose for king, for treasurer of warriors, if thou art willing to hold the realm of thy kinsfolk. To me thy disposition is well-liking more and more, beloved Beowulf; thou hast achieved, that the nations—Gothic leeds and spear-bearing Danes—shall have mutual friendship, and strife shall cease, the hostile surprises

whence they suffered erewhile;—there shall be, while I rule the wide realm, a community of treasure: many friends shall greet one another with gifts across the bath of the gannet; the ringèd ship shall bring over ocean presents and tokens of love. I know the people to be equally as towards foe so towards friend constant in mind, either way irreproachable, in olden wise.”

Then did the Shelter of warriors, the son of Halfdene, further give into his possession twelve hoarded jewels; he bade him go with the presents visit his own people in comfort, and soon come back again. Then did the king of noble ancestry, the chief of the Scyldings, kiss the incomparable thane and clasp him by the neck; tears from him fell, the greyhaired man; forecast was both ways to the man of old experience, but one way stronger than the other, namely, that they might never meet again, proud men in the assembly. To him the man was so dear, that he could not restrain the passion of his breast, but deep in the affections of his soul a secret longing after the beloved man stemmed the current of his blood.

Beowulf departing thence, a warrior gold-bedight, trod the grassy earth conscious of wealth:—the sea-goer, which was riding at anchor, awaited his owner and lord. Then upon the march was the liberality of Hrothgar often praised; that was a king, every way without reproach; until old age had bereft him of the vantage of his prowess,—him who had often been a terror to many.

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Then the Dragon began to spirt fire-gleeds, to burn the cheerful farmsteads; the flame-light glared aloft, in defiance of men; the hostile air-flyer would leave nothing there alive. The war-craft of the Worm was manifest in all parts; the rage of the deadly foe was seen far and near; how the ravaging invader hated and ruined the Gothic people; to his hoard he shot back again, to his dark mansion, before the hour of day. He had encompassed the landfolk with flame, with fire and conflagration; he trusted in his mountain, his warcraft, and his rampart; that confidence deceived him.

Then was the crushing news reported to Beowulf with swiftmess and certainty, that his own mansion, best of buildings, was melting away in fiery eddies, even the gift-seat of the Goths. That was to the goodman a rude experience in his breast, hugest of heart-griefs; the wise man felt as if he should, in despite of venerable law, break out against Providence, against the Eternal Lord, with bitter outrage; his breast within him surged with murky thoughts, in a manner unwonted with him. The fire-drake had desolated the stronghold of the nobles, the sea-board front, that enclosed pale, with fierce missiles. For him therefore the war-king, the lord of the Storm-folk, studied revenge.

He gave orders, that they should make for him, the shelter of warriors, the captain of knights, wholly of iron, a war-shield, a master-piece; he knew assuredly, that forest-timber would not serve him, linden-wood against flame! Destined he was, the prince of proved valour, to meet the end of his allotted days, of his worldly life;—and the Worm (was to die) at the same time, long though he had held the hoarded wealth.

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Then once more the beloved king recovered his senses, drew the war-knife, biting and battle-sharp, which he wore on his mail-coat; the crownèd head of the Storm-fold gashed the Worm in the middle. They had quelled the foe, death-daring prowess had executed revenge, and they two together, cousin ethelings, had destroyed him; such should a fellow be, a thane at need. To the chieftain that was the supreme triumphal hour of his career—by his own deeds—of his life's completed work.

Then began the wound which the earth-dragon had just now inflicted on him, to inflame and swell. That he soon discovered, that in his breast fatal mischief was working, venom in the inward parts. Then the Etheling went until he sate him on a stone by the mound, thoughtfully pondering; he looked upon the cunning work of dwarfs, how there the world-old earth-dome do contain within it stone arches firmly set upon piers. Upon him then, gory from conflict,

illustrious monarch, the thane immeasurably good, ladled water with hand upon his natural chieftain, battle-worn; and unloosened his helmet. Beowulf discoursed—in spite of his hurt he spake, his deadly exhausting wound; he knew well that he had spent his hours, his enjoyment of earth; surely all was gone of the tale of his days, death immediately nigh—“Now I would have given my war-weeds to my son, had it so been that any heir had been given to come after me, born of my body. I have ruled this people fifty winters; there was not the king, not any king of those neighbouring peoples, who dared to greet me with warmates, to menace with terror. I in my habitation observed social obligations, I held my own with justice, I have not sought insidious quarrels, nor have I sworn many false oaths. Considering all this, I am able, though sick with deadly wounds, to have comfort; forasmuch as the Ruler of men cannot charge me with murder-bale of kinsmen, when my life quitteth the body.

“Now quickly go thou, to examine the treasure, under the hoary rock, beloved Wiglaf, now the Worm lieth dead, sleepeth sore wounded, of riches bereaved. Be now on the alert, that I may ascertain the ancient wealth, the golden property, may fully survey the brilliant gems; that I may be able the more contentedly, after (seeing) the treasured store, to resign my life, and the lordship which I long have held.”

Then I heard tell how the son of Wihstan after the injunction promptly obeyed his wounded death-sick lord; bore his ring-mail, linkèd war-sark, under the roof of the barrow. Then the victorious youth, as he went along by the stony bench, the true and courageous thane, beheld many jewels of value, gold glistening, indenting the ground, wondrous things in the barrow; and the lair of the Worm, the old dawn-flyer—vases standing, choice vessels of men of old, with none to burnish them—their incrustations fallen away. There was many a helmet, old and rusty, many a bracelet, with appendage of trinkets. Treasure may easily, gold in the earth, may easily make a fool of any man; heed it who will! Likewise he saw looming above the hoard a banner all golden, greatest marvel of handiwork, woven with arts

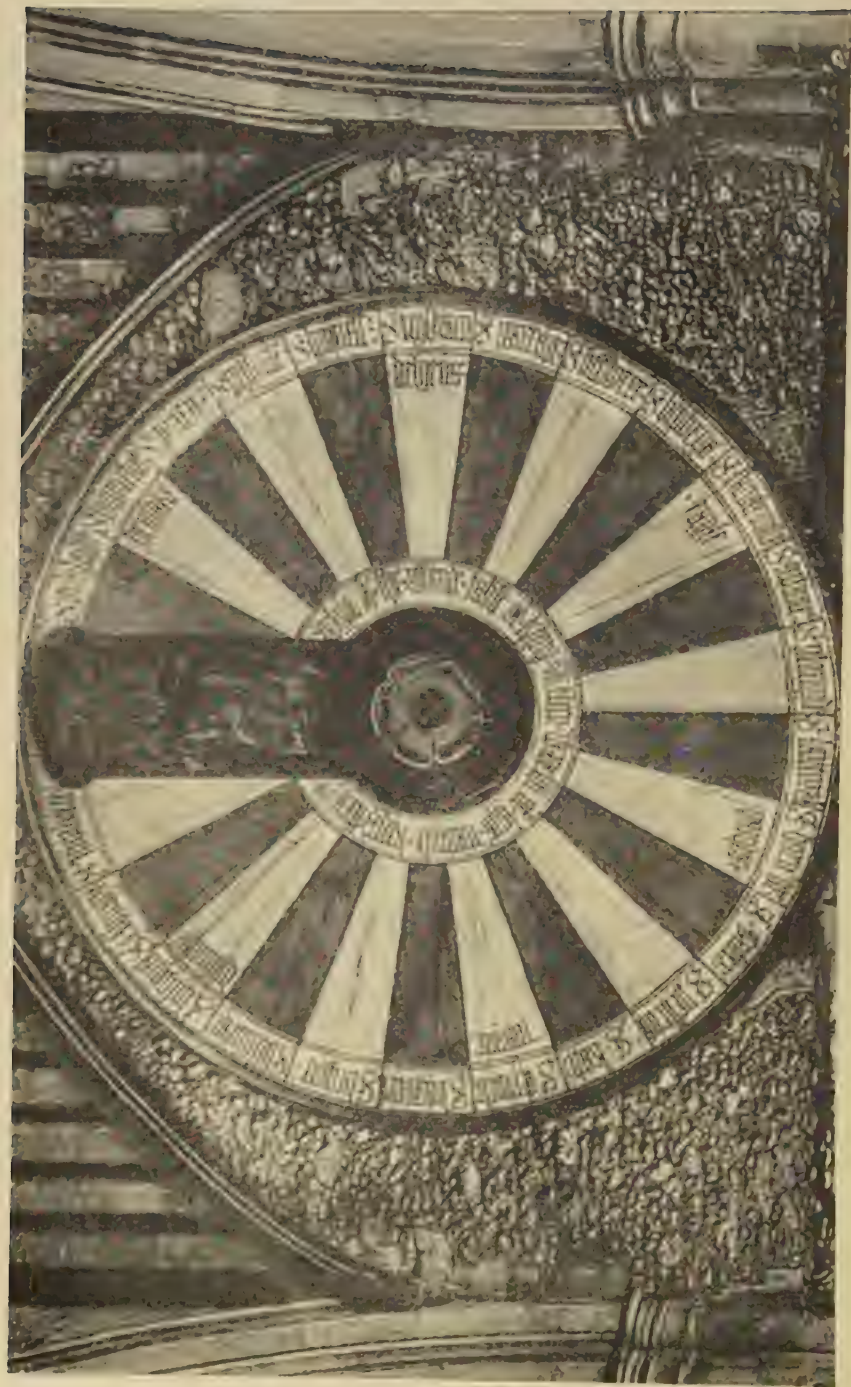
of incantation; out of it there stood forth a gleam of light, insomuch that he was able to discern the surface of the floor, and survey the strange curiosities. Of the Worm there was not any appearance, but the knife had put him out of the way.

Then heard I how in the chambered mound the old work of dwarfs was spoiled by a single man, how he gathered into his lap cups and platters at his own discretion; the banner also he took, the most brilliant of ensigns; the sword with its iron edge had even now dispatched the old proprietor, the one who had been the possessor of these treasures for a long while; a hot and flaming terror he had waged for the hoard, gushing with destruction at midnights; until he died the death.

The messenger was in haste, eager to return, fraught with spoils; painfully he wondered in his brave soul whether he should find alive the prince of the Storm-folk, on the open ground where he left him erst, chivalrously dying. He then bearing the treasures, found the illustrious king, his captain, bleeding from his wounds, at the extremity of life; he began again to sprinkle him with water, until the point of speech forced open the treasures of his breast. Beowulf discoursed, the old man in pain, he contemplated the gold:

“I do utter a thanksgiving to the Lord of all, to the king of glory, to the eternal captain, for those spoils upon which I here do gaze; to think that I have been permitted to acquire such for my Leeds before the day of my death. Now I have sold my expiring life-term for a hoard of treasure; ye now shall provide for the requirements of the Leeds; I cannot be any longer here. Order my brave warriors to erect a lofty cairn after the bale-fire, at the headland over the sea; it shall tower aloft on Hronesness for a memorial to my Leeds, that sea-faring men in time to come may call it Beowulf’s Barrow, those who on distant voyages drive their foamy barks over the scowling floods.”

The brave-hearted monarch took off from his neck the golden collar and gave it to the thane, to the young spear-fighter, his gold-hued helmet, coronet, and byrnie; bade him brook them well: “Thou art the last remnant of our



KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE

This great table has hung in Winchester Castle hall since 1365, and was at that date regarded as a relic from ancient times. Henry VIII had it painted and the names of the knights inscribed upon it.

stock, of the Wægmundings; Fate has swept all my kinsmen away into eternity, princes in chivalry; I must after them."

That was the aged man's latest word, from the meditations of his breast, before he chose the bale-fire, the hot consuming flames; out of his bosom the soul departed, to enter into the lot of the Just.

THE ROUND TABLE KNIGHTS

KING ARTHUR was a semi-legendary, semi-historical person around whom a cycle of mediæval stories clustered. Whether or not such a ruler ever lived has been a subject of much scholarly contention. There is reason to believe that after the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain, one named Arthur served as protector, hastening to whatever part of the island needed him most. Also the derivation of the name carries with it evidence that it was once borne by a Celtic god who personified forces of nature; both solar myths and others connected with the productivity of the earth seem to have been associated with him. As early as the fifth century several separate tales were told of Arthur, supposedly a king, yet accorded many of the attributes of the Celtic deity. Finally Geoffrey of Monmouth gathered together the various tales and set them forth in his history, if we may so classify his work, which combined legends and traditions and ingeniously supplied any occurring gaps. His book provided the first clear narrative and when Sir Thomas Malory published his *Le Morte d'Arthur* in 1485 he borrowed heavily from it. In Malory modern poets have found a wealth of material for the retelling of ancient tales.

So far as they exist at all, the underlying facts for the Arthur cycle reach much farther into a remote past than those of Roland, nevertheless these stories remained fluid and continued to take on the characteristics and ideals of later centuries wherein life was utterly unlike that of primitive Britain. Consequently, while Roland is distinctly a song of war, the legends of King Arthur are filled with love and romance, an outgrowth of chivalry and knighthood. Fighting is still important but considerable time is spent succoring helpless maidens in distress, or aiding the defenseless and aged, imprisoned in towers by cruel aggres-

sors. Tournaments and affairs of the heart played an absorbing part with the gallant knights whose lives were devoted to the service of their sovereign, to defending the weak and to winning the favor of courtly ladies.

Although the various tales which finally formed the Arthur cycle were originally told in verse—that is, characterized by alliteration and regular measure, the invention of printing in the fifteenth century made it possible for an increasing number of readers to possess books, with the result that prose gained in favor and was employed by Malory in his *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

The story goes that Uther Pendragon ruled as king of Britain; by his union with Igerne a son, Arthur, was born. As an infant he was entrusted to Merlin, wise man and magician, who could accomplish marvellous feats through the cunning of his art. Arthur grows to young manhood without knowledge of his royal birth; he draws attention to himself when, unconscious of the significance of the feat, he draws a sword from a stone in which it is encased. The sword bears an inscription that whoever shall possess it shall become king of Britain. Not aware of this, Arthur pulls it out to provide a saber for his uncle, who has left his own at home. Many nobles had struggled to accomplish the difficult task of releasing the sword and retired in chagrin when their strong arms were unable to loose it. They haughtily refuse to believe that the inexperienced youth before them has succeeded where they failed and, to convince them, the sword is replaced in the stone where it again cleaves with the former resistance. A second time Arthur draws it forth without effort and then the people know that he is indeed the one destined by fate to govern them.

Arthur weds the fair Guinevere and with her becomes the possessor of the famous *Round Table*. An eminent scholar has vouchsafed the opinion that there was originally no intention of emphasizing its shape; that it was rather the *table* that was important, since prior to this kings had not gathered their warriors around them at a common board. Regardless of such an interpretation—which seems reasonable, the knights of King Arthur are inseparably associated, not with a table, but with the *Round Table*

that literature has made so familiar. In early times one great hall served many purposes: heavy boards were laid across supports to form tables for the feast, being removed later so that the warriors might sleep on the floor. The king held court in his hall and it served many other uses. So it may be that a permanent table, round in shape, where each knight had his own seat reserved for him alone, might have so impressed itself upon the minds of the bards that it was accorded a fixed place in their songs. The story recounts that after Arthur had assembled his chosen companions at the Round Table, their names were mysteriously inscribed in glowing letters at each place, while one seat, the *Siege Perilous*, was left vacant for one who should be wholly pure in heart. It was not filled until Galahad sat down, unaware of the tradition regarding it. Immediately his name was mysteriously inscribed as the others had been; and all knew that he was the one awaited to fill the vacant chair.

Of all the gallant nobles who surrounded Arthur at Camelot—said to have been the site of Westminster—none was more knightly than Launcelot du Lac. It was said that he too was born of royal blood. When he was an infant a spirit had arisen from the lake and snatched the child away from the queen, his mother, when she placed him for a moment out of her arms. He was brought up by the *Lady of the Lake*, who, it will be remembered, when King Arthur sorely needed a weapon, raised her arm from the water and handed him a sword.

After Launcelot had been sent out into the world to fight giants and perform the valiant deeds that fell to brave knights, he became passionately in love with the queen, Guinevere, who sometimes encouraged his advances, raising him to heights of ecstatic bliss; and often repulsed them, consigning him to endless misery. His reason gave way at one time and he was only restored to sanity by virtue of the Holy Grail. Loving fair Guinevere, he was indifferent to other beautiful ladies, who sighed because they were unable to win his devotion. The story most renowned concerns the beautiful Elaine, who saw him only to lose her heart to him. When Launcelot was unable to return her

affection, she pined and died, requesting that her body be placed on a barge and allowed to float down the river till it should come to Camelot. In her hand was a letter which she had penned asking him to bury her. This strange black barge, bearing the body of the Maid of Astolat, caught the eye of King Arthur and he sent to learn about it. To his assembled court he read the letter aloud and the queen asked Launcelot whether he might not have averted this catastrophe. He replied that love could not be given merely because desired—that bound, it soon found means of escape. This theory was fervently accepted by knights of old who believed that marriage usually put love to flight and consequently concerned themselves with loves unwed—at least, to them.

This story of the Maid of Astolat was transformed into something entirely new by Tennyson in his *Lady of Shalott*, one of the most unusual, fanciful poems that ever came from his pen. In justice it should be said that the genuine grief of the knight over the artless maid who pined away for love of him, and his care to have mass said for her, was in contrast to the inane words of the modern poem: “He said: She has a lovely face; God in his mercy lend her grace.”

Another legend makes Elaine the mother of Galahad, Launcelot being accepted as his father.

Lord Tennyson has made the legends of Arthur familiar to people generally and many who have never seen Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* are acquainted with the fair Guinevere and the Knights of the Round Table. However, his interpretation is often unlike that of the earlier stories. For example, he paints Guinevere in unhappy light, emphasizing her infidelity to a king of pure and blameless life. The early legends do not present King Arthur in just that light. If half the conquests in the realm of hearts attributed to the king are to be credited, we cannot feel that he was particularly imposed upon. Tennyson belonged to the Victorian age when poets often wrote what some one has lately called “preachments.”

While Arthur is the important figure around whom the various tales are grouped, others hold attention more often

than he. The Holy Grail belongs to the same cycle. At length King Arthur received a dire wound and was removed to a distant isle to recover. Tradition said he merely slept and would some day return to the land he loved, where his memory was deeply revered.

The imaginative qualities of the Celts are conspicuous in these legends. The miraculous is constantly occurring. Magic leads the way to many an unexpected solution and mystery has a part, as it has still in the folk tales of Wales and Ireland.

While belonging to the early centuries when Christianity was making its way with a people who still clung to pagan gods, the Arthur stories as we know them reflect the later rather than the early Middle Ages. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they were thought to portray the very perfection of knight-errantry and noble conduct. Thus they possessed an educative value which can scarcely be overestimated. Through the ages that have followed, the readiness of the knights to spring to the aid of the defenseless, to champion the cause of the oppressed, to meet death willingly rather than prove false to their vows, have influenced men to choose the nobler way and emulate their fine examples. Sir Galahad remains through all ages the peerless knight, an ideal rather than a reality.

FROM LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

*How Arthur was chosen king, and of wonders and marvels
of a sword taken out of a stone by the said Arthur.*

THEN stood the realm in great jeopardy long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many weened to have been king. Then Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him for to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen of arms, that they should to London come by Christmas, upon pain of cursing, and for this cause, that Jesus, that was born on that night, that he would of his great mercy show some miracle, as he was come to be king of mankind, for to show some miracle should be rightwise king of this realm. So the Archbishop, by the advice of Merlin, sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms that they should come by Christmas even unto London. And many of them made them clean of their life, that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God. So in the greatest church of London, whether it were Paul's or not the French book maketh no mention, all the estates were long or all day in the church for to pray. And when matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard, against the high altar, a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone, and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus—Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England. Then the people marvelled, and told it to the Archbishop. I command, said the Archbishop, that ye keep you within your church, and pray unto God still; that no man touch the sword till the high mass be all done. So when all masses were done all the lords went to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some assayed; such as would have

been king. But none might stir the sword nor move it. He is not here, said the Archbishop, that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him known. But this is my counsel, said the Archbishop, that we let purvey ten knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword. So it was ordained, and then there was made a cry, that every man should essay that would, for to win the sword. And upon New Year's Day the barons let make a jousts and a tournament, that all knights that would joust or tourney there might play, and all this was ordained for to keep the lords and the commons together, for the Archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword. So upon New Year's Day, when the service was done, the barons rode unto the field, some to joust and some to tourney, and so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode unto the jousts, and with him rode Sir Kay his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother; and Sir Kay was made knight at All Hallowmass afore. So as they rode to the jousts-ward, Sir Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard, and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day. So when he came to the churchyard, Sir Arthur alit and tied his horse to the stile, and so he went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were at jousting; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way until he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist well it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father Sir Ector, and said: Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone, wherefore I must be king of this land. When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there they alit all three, and went into the church. And anon he made Sir Kay to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. Sir,

said Sir Kay, by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me. How gat ye this sword? said Sir Ector to Arthur. Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain. Found ye any knights about this sword? said Sir Ector. Nay, said Arthur. Now, said Sir Ector to Arthur, I understand ye must be king of this land. Wherefore I, said Arthur, and for what cause? Sir, said Ector, for God will have it so, for there should never man have drawn out this sword, but he that shall be rightways king of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again. That is no mastery, said Arthur, and so he put it in the stone, therewithal Sir Ector essayed to pull out the sword and failed.

How King Arthur pulled out the sword divers times.

Now essay, said Sir Ector unto Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. Now shall ye essay, said Sir Ector to Arthur. I will well, said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector knelt down to the earth, and Sir Kay. Alas, said Arthur, my own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me? Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so, I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wot well ye are of an higher blood than I weened ye were. And then Sir Ector told him all, how he was betaken him for to nourish him, and by whose commandment, and by Merlin's deliverance. Then Arthur made great dole when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father. Sir, said Ector unto Arthur, will ye be my good and gracious lord when ye are king? Else were I to blame, said Arthur, for ye are the man in the world that I am most beholden to, and my good lady and mother your wife, that as well as her own hath fostered me and kept. And if ever it be God's will that I be king as ye say, ye shall desire of me what I may do, and I shall not fail you, God forbid I should fail you. Sir, said Sir Ector, I will ask no more of you, but that ye will make my son, your foster brother, Sir Kay, seneschal of all your lands. That shall be

done, said Arthur, and more, by the faith of my body, that never man shall have that office but he, while he and I live. Therewithal they went unto the Archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved, and by whom; and on Twelfth-day all the barons came thither, and to essay to take the sword, who that would essay. But there afore them all, there might none take it out but Arthur; wherefore there were many lords wroth, and said it was great shame unto them all and the realm, to be over-governed with a boy of no high blood born, and so they fell out at that time that it was put off till Candlemas, and then all the barons should meet there again; but always the ten knights were ordained to watch the sword day and night, and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. So at Candlemas many more great lords came thither for to have won the sword, but there might none prevail. And right as Arthur did at Christmas, he did at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily, whereof the barons were sore aggrieved and put it off in delay till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur sped before, so did he at Easter, yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be king, and put it off in a delay till the feast of Pentecost. Then the Archbishop of Canterbury by Merlin's providence let purvey then of the best knights that they might get, and such knights as Uther Pendragon loved best and trusted in his days. And such knights were put about Arthur as Sir Baudwin of Britain, Sir Kay, Sir Ulfius, Sir Brastias. All these with many other, were always about Arthur, day and night, till the feast of Pentecost.

How King Arthur was crowned, and how he made officers.

And at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men essayed to pull at the sword that would essay, but none might prevail but Arthur, and pulled it out afore all the lords and commons that were there, wherefore all the commons cried at once, We will have Arthur unto our king, we will put him no more in delay, for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king, and who that holdeth against it, we will slay him. And therewith they all kneeled at once, both rich and poor, and cried Arthur mercy because they had delayed

him so long, and Arthur forgave them, and took the sword between both his hands, and offered it upon the altar where the Archbishop was, and so was he made knight of the best man that was there. And so anon was the coronation made. And there was he sworn unto his lords and the commons for to be a true king, to stand with true justice from thenceforth the days of this life. Also then he made all lords that held of the crown to come in, and to do service as they ought to do. And many complaints were made unto Sir Arthur of great wrongs that were done since the death of King Uther, of many lands that were bereaved lords, knights, ladies, and gentlemen. Wherefore King Arthur made the lands to be given again unto them that owned them. When this was done, that the king had stablished all the countries about London, then he let make Sir Kay seneschal of England; and Sir Baudwin of Britain was made constable; and Sir Ulfus was made chamberlain; and Sir Brastias was made warden to wait upon the north from Trent forwards, for it was that time the most party the king's enemies. But within few years after, Arthur won all the north, Scotland, and all that were under their obeisance. Also Wales, a part of it held against Arthur, but he overcame them all, as he did the remnant, through the noble prowess of himself and his knights of the Round Table.

How Arthur by the mean of Merlin gat Excalibur his sword of the Lady of the Lake.

Right so the king and he departed, and went unto an hermit that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves; so the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go, and so departed. And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force, said Merlin, hereby is a sword that shall be yours, and I may. So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo! said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damosel going upon the lake. What damosel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady

of the Lake, said Merlin; and within the lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth, and richly beseen; and this damosel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she will give you that sword. Anon withal came the damosel unto Arthur, and saluted him, and he her again. Damosel, said Arthur, what sword is that, that yonder the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword. Sir Arthur, king, said the damosel, that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it you, ye shall have it. By my faith, said Arthur, I will give you what gift ye will ask. Well! said the damosel, go ye into yonder barge, and row yourself to the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time. So Sir Arthur and Merlin alit and tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the ship, and when they came to the sword that the hand held, Sir Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him, and the arm and the hand went under the water. And so they came unto the land and rode forth, and then Sir Arthur saw a rich pavilion. What signifieth yonder pavilion? It is the knight's pavilion, said Merlin, that ye fought with last, Sir Pellinore; but he is out, he is not there. He hath ado with a knight of yours that hight Egglame, and they have foughten together, but at the last Egglame fled, and else he had been dead, and he hath chased him even to Carlion, and we shall meet with him anon in the highway. That is well said, said Arthur, now have I a sword, now will I wage battle with him, and be avenged on him. Sir, you shall not so, said Merlin, for the knight is weary of fighting and chasing, so that ye shall have no worship to have ado with him; also he will not be lightly matched of one knight living, and therefore it is my counsel, let him pass, for he shall do you good service in short time, and his sons after his days. Also ye shall see that day in short space, you shall be right glad to give him your sister to wed. When I see him, I will do as ye advise me, said Arthur. Then Sir Arthur looked on the sword, and liked it passing well. Whether liketh you better, said Merlin, the sword or the scabbard? Me liketh better the sword, said Arthur. Ye are more unwise, said Merlin, for the scabbard is worth ten of the swords, for whiles ye

have the scabbard upon you, ye shall never lose no blood be ye never so sore wounded, therefore keep well the scabbard always with you. So they rode unto Carlion, and by the way they met with Sir Pellinore; but Merlin had done such a craft, that Pellinore saw not Arthur, and he passed by without any words. I marvel, said Arthur, that the knight would not speak. Sir, said Merlin, he saw you not, for an he had seen you, ye had not lightly departed. So they came unto Carlion, whereof his knights were passing glad. And when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so, alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under such a chieftain, that would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.

How King Arthur let do cry a jousts, and how Sir Lamorak came in, and overthrew Sir Gawaine and many other.

Then within three days after the king let make a jousting at a priory. And there made them ready many knights of the Round Table, for Sir Gawaine and his brethren made them ready to joust; but Tristram, Launcelot, nor Dinadan, would not joust, but suffered Sir Gawaine, for the love of King Arthur, with his brethren, to win the gree if they might. Then on the morn they apparellled them to joust, Sir Gawaine and his four brethren, and did there great deeds of arms. And Sir Ector de Maris did marvellously well, but Sir Gawaine passed all that fellowship; wherefore King Arthur and all the knights gave Sir Gawaine the honour at the beginning. Right so King Arthur was ware of a knight and two squires, the which came out of a forest side, with a shield covered with leather, and then he came slyly and hurtled here and there, and anon with one spear he had smitten down two knights of the Round Table. Then with his hurtling he lost the covering of his shield, then was the king and all other ware that he bare a red shield. O Jesu, said King Arthur, see where rideth a stout knight, he with the red shield. And there was noise and crying: Beware the knight with the red shield. So within a little while he had overthrown three brethren of Sir Gawaine's. So God me help, said King Arthur, meseemeth yonder is the best joustier that ever I saw. With that he saw him encounter

with Sir Gawaine, and he smote him down with so great force that he made his horse to avoid his saddle. How now, said the king, Sir Gawaine hath a fall; well were me an I knew what knight he were with the red shield. I know him well, said Dinadan, but as at this time ye shall not know his name. By my head, said Sir Tristram, he joustet better than Sir Palomides, and if ye list to know his name, wit ye well his name is Sir Lamorak de Galis. As they stood thus talking, Sir Gawaine and he encountered together again, and there he smote Sir Gawaine from his horse, and bruised him sore. And in the sight of King Arthur he smote down twenty knights, beside Sir Gawaine and his brethren. And so clearly was the prize given him as a knight peerless. Then slyly and marvellously Sir Lamorak withdrew him from all the fellowship into the forest side. All this espied King Arthur, for his eye went never from him. Then the King, Sir Launcelot, Sir Tristram, and Sir Dinadan, took their hackneys, and rode straight after the good knight, Sir Lamorak de Galis, and there found him. And thus said the king: Ah, fair knight, well ye be found. When he saw the king he put off his helm and saluted him, and when he saw Sir Tristram he alit down off his horse and ran to him to take him by the thighs, but Sir Tristram would not suffer him, but he alit or that he came, and either took other in arms, and made great joy of other. The king was glad, and also was all the fellowship of the Round Table, except Sir Gawaine and his brethren. And when they wist that he was Sir Lamorak, they had great despite at him, and were wonderly wrath with him that he had put them to dishonour that day. Then Gawaine called privily in council all his brethren, and to them said thus: Fair brethren, here may ye see, whom that we hate King Arthur loveth, and whom that we love he hateth. And wit ye well, my fair brethren, that this Sir Lamorak will never love us, because we slew his father, King Pellinore, for we deemed that he slew our father, King of Orkney. And for the despite of Pellinore, Sir Lamorak did us a shame to our mother, therefore I will be revenged. Sir, said Sir Gawaine's brethren, let see how ye will or may be revenged, and ye shall find us ready. Well, said Gawaine, hold you still and we shall espy our time.

How Sir Percivale was made knight of King Arthur, and how a dumb maid spake, and brought him to the Round Table.

Now turn we again unto Sir Lamorak, and speak we of his brethren, Sir Tor, which was King Pellinore's first son and begotten of Ayres, wife of the cowherd, for he was a bastard; and Sir Aglavale was his first son begotten in wedlock; Sir Lamorak, Dornar, Percivale, these were his sons too in wedlock. So when King Mark and Sir Tristram were departed from the court there was made great dole and sorrow for the departing of Sir Tristram. Then the king and his knights made no manner of joys eight days after. And at the eight days' end there came to the court a knight with a young squire with him. And when this knight was unarmed, he went to the king and required him to make the young squire a knight. Of what lineage is he come? said King Arthur. Sir, said the knight, he is the son of King Pellinore that did you some time good service, and he is a brother unto Sir Lamorak de Galis, the good knight. Well, said the king, for what cause desire ye that of me that I should make him knight? Wit you well, my lord the king, that this young squire is brother to me as well as to Sir Lamorak, and my name is Aglavale. Sir Aglavale, said Arthur, for the love of Sir Lamorak, and for his father's love, he shall be made knight tomorrow. Now tell me, said Arthur, what is his name? Sir, said the knight, his name is Percivale de Galis. So on the morn the king made him knight in Camelot. But the king and all the knights thought it would be long or that he proved a good knight. Then at the dinner, when the king was set at the table, and every knight after he was of prowess, the king commanded him to be set among mean knights; and so was Sir Percivale set as the king commanded. Then was there a maiden in the Queen's court that was come of high blood, and she was dumb and never spake word. Right so she came straight into the hall, and went unto Sir Percivale, and took him by the hand and said aloud, that the king and all the knights might hear it: Arise, Sir Percivale, the noble knight and God's knight, and go with me; and so he did. And there she

brought him to the right side of the Siege Perilous, and said, Fair knight, take here thy siege, for that siege appertaineth to thee and to none other. Right so she departed and asked a priest. And as she was confessed and houselled then she died. Then the king and all the court made great joy of Sir Percivale.

How the Queen desired to see Galahad; and how after, all the knights were replenished with the Holy Grail, and how they avowed the enquest of the same.

Then the King, at the Queen's request, made him to alight and to unlace his helm, that the Queen might see him in the visage. When she beheld him she said: Soothly I dare well say that Sir Launcelot begat him, for never two men resembled more in likeness, therefore it is no marvel though he be of great prowess. So a lady that stood by the Queen said: Madam, for God's sake ought he of right to be so good a knight? Yea, forsooth, said the Queen, for he is of all parties come of the best knights of the world and of the highest lineage; for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degree from our Lord Jesu Christ, and Sir Galahad is of the ninth degree from our Lord Jesu Christ, therefore I dare say they be the greatest gentlemen of the world. And the King and all estates went home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong to the great minister, and so after upon that to supper, and every knight sat in his own place as they were toforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought the place should all to-drive. In the midst of this blast entered a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other, by their seeming, fairer than ever they saw afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world. And when the Holy Grail had been

borne through the hall, then the Holy Vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became: then had they all breath to speak. And then the King yielded thankings to God, of His good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the King, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly for that he hath shewed us this day, at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost. Now, said Sir Gawaine, we have been served this day with meats and drinks we thought on; but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the Holy Grail, it was so preciousely covered. Wherefore I will make here avow, that to-morn, without longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the Holy Grail, that I shall hold me out a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here; and if I may not speed I shall return again as he that may not be against the will of our Lord Jesu Christ. When they of the Table Round heard Sir Gawaine say so, they arose up the most part and made such avows as Sir Gawaine had made. Anon as King Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for he wist well they might not again say their avows. Alas, said King Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, ye have nigh slain me with the avow and promise that ye have made; for through you ye have bereft me the fairest fellowship and the truest of knighthood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world; for when they depart from hence I am sure they all shall never meet more in this world, for they shall die many in the quest. And so it forthinketh me a little, for I have loved them as well as my life, wherefore it shall grieve me right sore, the departition of this fellowship: for I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship.

How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword Excalibur into the water, and how he was delivered to ladies in a barge.

. . . . Ah Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king

swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soul! Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again to the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king, therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe and waves wanne. Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would

betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as thou mayest; for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar, of a chapel and an hermitage.

How Sir Bedivere found him on the morrow dead in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit.

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit grovelling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little tofore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed. Sir, said Bedivere, what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for? Fair son, said the hermit, I wot not verily, but by deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besaunts. Alas, said Sir Bedivere, that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel. Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. For from hence will I never go, said Sir Bedivere, by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur. Ye are welcome to me, said the hermit, for I know ye better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke, Sir Lucan the Butler, was your brother. Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard before. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit that was tofore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorised, nor more of the very certainty of his death heard I never read, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for King Arthur, for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life; and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such

one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur: for this tale Sir Belvidere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written.

*Of the opinion of some men of the death of King Arthur;
and how Queen Guenever made her a nun in Almesbury.*

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say: here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic jacet Arthurus Rex, quondam Rex que futurus.* Thus leave I here Sir Bedivere with the hermit, that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastonbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in their prayers, and fastings, and great abstinence. And when Queen Guenever understood that King Arthur was slain, and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then the queen stole away, and five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury; and there she let make herself a nun, and ware white clothes and black, and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry; but lived in fasting, prayers, and alms-deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we Queen Guenever in Almesbury, a nun in white clothes and black, and there she was Abbess and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

How Sir Ector found Sir Launcelot his brother dead, and how Constantine reigned next after Arthur; and of the end of this book.

And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the quire of Joyous Gard, he alit and put his horse from him, and came into the quire, and there he saw men sing and weep. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them.

Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother, Sir Launcelot, dead; and then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him. And when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon. And when he waked it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. Ah Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all Christian knights, and now I dare say, said Sir Ector, thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand. And thou were the courteoust knight that ever bare shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrad horse. And thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest. Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept Sir Launcelot's corpse a-loft fifteen days, and then they buried it with great devotion. And then at leisure they went all with the Bishop of Canterbury to his hermitage, and there they were together more than a month. Then Sir Constantine, that was Sir Cador's son of Cornwall, was chosen king of England. And he was a full noble knight, and worshipfully he ruled this realm. And then this King Constantine sent for the Bishop of Canterbury, for he heard say where he was. And so he was restored unto his Bishopric, and left that hermitage. And Sir Bedivere was there ever still hermit to his life's end. Then Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Gahalantine, Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamore, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Villiars le Valiant, Sir Clarrus of Clermont, all these knights drew them to their countries. Howbeit King Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realm. And there they all lived in their countries as holy men. And some English books make mention that they went never out of England after the death of Sir Launcelot, but that was but favour of makers. For the French book maketh mention and is authorised, that Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir Blamore, and Sir Bleoberis, went

into the Holy Land thereas Jesu Christ was quick and dead, and anon as they had stablished their lands. For the book saith, so Sir Launcelot commanded them for to do, or ever he passed out of this world. And these four knights did many battles upon the miscreants or Turks. And there they died upon a Good Friday for God's sake.

Here is the end of the book of King Arthur, and of his noble knights of the Round Table, that when they were whole together there was ever an hundred and forty. And here is the end of the death of Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen that readeth this book of Arthur and his knights, from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am alive, that God send me good deliverance, and when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soul. For this book was ended the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth, by Sir Thomas Malory, knight, as Jesu help him for his great might, as he is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Caxton's colophon

Thus endeth this noble and joyous book entitled Le Morte d'Arthur. Notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts of the said King Arthur, of his noble knights of the Round Table, their marvellous enquests and adventures, the achieving of the Holy Grail, and in the end the dolorous death and departing of this world of them all. Which book was reduced into English by Sir Thomas Malory, knight, as afore is said, and by me divided into twenty-one books, chaptered and imprinted, and finished in the abbey Westminster the last day of July the year of our lord MCCCCLXXXV.

FROM SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands. . . .

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars. . . .

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

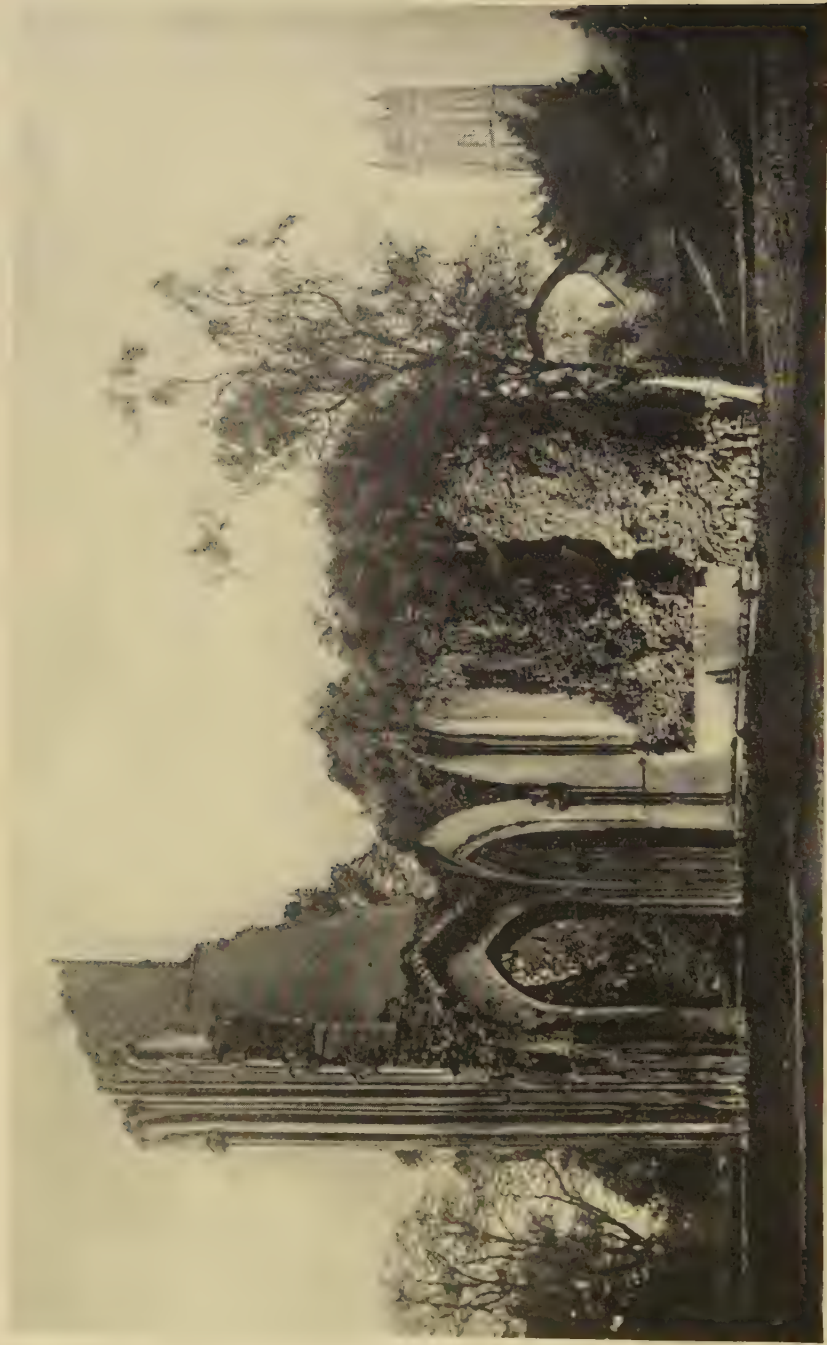
The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

—TENNYSON.

THE GRAIL CYCLE

IN ORDER to understand how it came about that the stories of the *Holy Grail* were so widely circulated in the Middle Ages, it is necessary to recall the attitude of mind during mediæval times. It was commonly believed that the dead bodies of saintly characters possessed virtues that might work miracles for those who contacted them. This was why each town thought it necessary to have at least one saint. The remains of persons who were thought to have led pure lives were brought long distances that the townspeople might have the benefit of their presence in their midst. Best of all was it to have the entire body or the skeleton, if centuries had elapsed since death; if this were not possible, at least some bones were earnestly desired. Those who went on pilgrimages to distant shrines tried to bring home some *relics* for the benefit of those who had not been able to go. That these actually possessed mysterious properties for the healing of disease, the alleviation of distress and conferring of blessings generally was not questioned. Christ having lived the purest life of any earthly person, it would naturally follow that anything he had used or contacted would retain such beneficial properties to a high degree. For this reason the cup or bowl which he was supposed to have used the last time he supped with his disciples was held in highest reverence. Only the pure were able to look upon it without injury, so intense was its effulgence.

The legends which explained the origin of the Grail, being more consciously inventive to complete the narrative, are less interesting than the accounts of the search that was made by various mediæval knights after it was lost. Several stories exist accounting for the vessel and explaining how it came to partake of the qualities of Christ. One, as just stated, identified it as the cup from which he drank with his



THE RUINED ABBEY OF GLASTONBURY

Here, according to tradition Joseph of Arimathea brought the Holy Grail, and the thorn tree which is said to blossom each Christmas.

believers; Joseph of Arimathea kept it in memory of the Last Supper and it was said that he caught drops of blood as they fell from the body on the cross or shortly after when it was removed. Because he helped to make the grave for burial of the body, the legend related that the Jews were angry with him and cast him into prison where he remained without injury for a whole year because he kept this vessel with him. He was sustained by it as with food. Sometimes it seems as though the Grail actually supplied food. Later, at the intervention of the Roman emperor, Joseph was released and left the East with his family lest new animosities might break out again. His son was supposed to have brought the vessel into the isle of Britain where it was guarded by knights who were dedicated to its service. However, due to impure acts they became unworthy of their trust and the Grail disappeared.

Other songs were sung of it in Spain and according to these the Moors brought the story with them and the Christians adapted it to their own use. Two separate versions exist and it is not possible to reconcile one with the other so far as details go. Suffice it to say that the word *Grail* comes from the old French *grael*, meaning a bowl or vessel. It was believed by all to have been brought into direct contact with Christ and to have absorbed virtue to such a degree that it partook of his essence and could work miracles. It was thought to have been brought into Western Europe and to confer special benefit upon those who were unsullied and worthy of seeing and sharing its properties.

It is probable that a similar legend grew up in many lands for there are those who claim for it Celtic origin; others believe it grew up in France and thence made its way to Britain; again, the Saracens were credited with having brought the tale into Spain. The fact that it was known far and wide only testifies to the importance laid upon it.

The story as recounted by Malory inspired Tennyson to write of it in the nineteenth century; Lowell and several other poets also making use of it. The version which was given by Wolfram von Eschenback in verse was destined to make such an impression on Richard Wagner that he wrote his greatest music-drama on this theme.

In his *Idylls of the King* Tennyson recounts that while Arthur was away on a military campaign, to the knights assembled at the Round Table the Holy Grail appeared, borne by an invisible hand around the hall; they did not see the vessel, they saw only the ineffable splendor of the light. Thereupon they vowed they would go forth to find it. When Arthur returned and found that his companions were about to scatter for this purpose, he tried to detain them by reminding them that they had not actually seen it and were but following a fancy. None would abandon the project but forth they fared to seek it.

Only three were destined to see it: Galahad, the peerless knight, removed from earth while still pure and innocent, caught sight of it as he was being carried to heaven by hosts of angels. Parcival, whose mother kept him isolated during his childhood and youth, because she had lost her husband through the exigencies of war and wanted him to forego the trials and dangers of knighthood, was so unaware of the world that when he chanced to see some knights ride by in their shining armour, he thought they must be celestial beings. His ambition was aroused and sorrowfully his mother allowed him to sally forth into the world to find his place, although one story says that she died from grief. Bors also at last gained his desire and saw the cherished vessel. Many gallant knights scoured land and sea, in the end to find disappointment or to catch such a vision as illuminated Sir Launfal at the end of his quest.

It was in July, 1882, that the first performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* was presented in Bayreuth, the world's great artists having part in the performance which was attended by music lovers from all lands. Several times it was repeated. Since that time it has been presented by great opera companies in Europe and America. It is unlike other of Wagner's music-dramas, being the most religious and spiritual of them all.

The story has found expression in the realm of art as well as in music and poetry. Edwin Abbey, our own painter, developed the theme in a series of murals which decorate the Boston Public Library. Sir Galahad and other of the knights of King Arthur have been portrayed by other

artists, Watts' *Sir Galahad* being one of the most widely known.

THE HOLY GRAIL

“Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it ‘The Siege perilous,’
Perilous for good and ill; ‘for there,’ he said,
‘No man could sit but he should lose himself’:
And once by misadventure Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, ‘If I lose myself, I save myself!’

“Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

“And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past,
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

“I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest. . . .

“O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, ‘We have still a King.’

“And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how?—
O there, prechance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

“So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all:
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd,
Follow'd and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest: and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,'
(Because the hall was all in tumult—some
Vowing, and some protesting), 'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision, and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Darkened; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,
'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn.' 'Yea, yea,' said he,
'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?'

"'Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
'Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'

"'Lo now,' said Arthur, 'have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

—TENNYSON.

THE SONG OF THE NIBELUNGS

THE tragedy of the Nibelungs is believed to have originated among the Burgundians; it was preserved by their conquerors, the Franks, and from them made its way into Germany, Scandinavia and Iceland. Siegfried, the hero, is shown to have been a native of the Netherlands, the Low Countries, or Netherlands. Into the latter part of the long poem the Huns and their king, Etzel or Attila are introduced. As now known, the cycle is composed of numerous short *adventures* or episodes, originally unrelated. The uncritical reader can easily discern that the latter part of the poem, pertaining to the revenge of Siegfried's murder, is not closely related to what has gone before but was probably added later to the story.

The first portion of the present poem centers around Siegfried, the youthful ideal of a warring age: handsome, fearless, surpassing his companions alike in the strife of battle and the feats of the tournament. His father Siegmund rules the Netherlands—his queen, Siegelind, Siegfried's mother. Siegfried is their only child and when he attains to knighthood, a royal celebration is made; numerous guests are entertained with lavish hospitality and made the recipients of costly gifts. Seven days they sojourn at the court, Siegfried outdoing all others in knightly skill. After all have departed, laden with treasure bestowed by the queen, Siegfried discloses to his parents that he has heard of the rare beauty of Kriemhild, daughter of the Burgundian king and that he wishes to win her for his wife. The parents demur until they realize that his heart is set upon the project, whereupon he is equipped with what is necessary for his journey. He takes along fourteen chosen companions, disdaining to make a display of force to coerce Dankrat in granting his desire.

Dankrat, king of the Burgundians, dwells at Worms-on-

the-Rhine, with Ute his queen. They have three sons: Gunther, Gernot and Giselher and one daughter, winsome Kriemhild, who has been kept closely at home under the care of her mother and the protection of her three brave brothers. About this time Gunther succeeds his dying father on the throne.

When Siegfried and his companions arrive in Worms, attention is immediately attracted to them and the king makes inquiry as to who the imposing strangers may be. His uncle Hagen is able to inform him, praising young Siegfried and advising Gunther in no way to give offence to a king so powerful as Siegmund. Consequently the strangers are well received and considerable time is spent in tournaments, feasts and such diversion as the age affords. When it becomes known that Siegfried comes as a suitor for the hand of the king's sister, Gunther makes an agreement with him: he wishes to wed Brunhild, queen of Iceland. She is represented to him as the equal of any knight in physical strength. It is said that she has vowed she will wed only he who is able to cast a heavier stone, wield a heavier spear and otherwise outdo her in feats of physical skill. Although uncertain as to his ability thus to qualify for her hand, Gunther has pledged his kingdom that he will accomplish it or die; provided Siegfried will accompany him on this dangerous mission he will give him, if victorious, the fair Kriemhild for his bride. Siegfried readily consents. He possesses the mantle of invisibility and agrees to come invisibly to the aid of Gunther in overcoming the Amazon queen. And so he does, standing by his side throughout the contests and giving him success in his undertaking. Outdone in strength, Brunhild tries to resort to treachery but Siegfried brings up so many troops unexpectedly that she yields, bidding her courtiers acknowledge Gunther as their king. Suspicious of his personal power, Brunhild overcomes him in the privacy of their room but Siegfried once more takes advantage of his cloak of invisibility to succor Gunther and conquers the strong queen, this time getting possession of her girdle which endows her with supernatural force. Once deprived

of it, she can no longer offer opposition and becomes normal in strength.

Burgundy welcomes Gunther's queen and at the festal board Siegfried demands his reward, whereupon he is given the hand of Kriemhild, a lovely maiden who glories in the prowess of her husband. Amid much gaiety they set out for Siegfried's realm, where they live happily for several years. Their son they name Gunther, while the Burgundian king returns the compliment by calling his heir after the noble Siegfried.

Brunhild has secretly chafed all these years at the popularity of Siegfried; while he had seemed to serve her husband as a vassal, he was nevertheless treated as an equal and she determined to put the matter to a test; to this end she persuaded her husband to invite Siegfried and his wife to visit them. During the sojourn of these two at the court in Worms the two women began to praise their husbands and Kriemhild at last disclosed that it had been Siegfried who really overcame Brunhild. In proof thereof she displayed the magic girdle which Siegfried had long before presented to her. From this moment Brunhild determined upon Siegfried's death, which occurred at the hand of Hagen. Overcome with grief for her lord, the stricken Kriemhild remained for some time at the court of her brother, detesting Hagen and planning how to revenge her murdered husband.

Induced by Hagen, Gunther persuades her to have the Nibelungen hoard brought to Burgundy, where she lavishes it indifferently on every hand. Fearful lest it will be exhausted, Hagen endeavors to rouse Gunther to take possession of it, but when he refuses, Hagen himself throws it into the River Rhine.

Thenceforward the story has little or nothing to do with the Nibelung treasure, but is concerned with the long-plotted revenge taken by Kriemhild for the treachery practised on Siegfried. After long years have passed in which she has continued to mourn the death of her brave husband, a proffer of marriage comes to her from king of the Huns, Etzel, or Attila. She consents at last merely because she hopes by this means to attain revenge. The Hunnish king

is devoted to her and a child is born whom the king idolizes, but Kriemhild is always sad, thinking of the husband of her youth. Finally, unbalanced by long grief and brooding, she plans treachery destined to cost not only her own life but that of her infant son and her brother as well. She induces Etzel to invite the Burgundian king and his associates to visit them, hoping thus to bring Hagen within reach of her power. When they are come she incites her vassals to make war upon them and they are ruthlessly cut down, while blood flows through the royal hall and carnage replaces festivity. She demands of Hagen where in the Rhine the Nibelungen treasure has been buried; he refuses to tell her; even at the point of the sword he dies without revealing it.

It is sometimes difficult to determine whether motives ascribed to the composers of these songs may not be perhaps the fancy of the critics. They were created to entertain; that they abounded with war and bloodshed was natural in view of the centuries that gave them birth. That they sometimes possess a haunting sense of tragedy and disaster, foreseen at the start and permeating the whole story, may have been due to the fact that life has always seemed tragic to those who brood over its profound problems. Certain scholars find in the *Nibelungenlied* a study of contradicting duties or allegiances: that of Kriemhild to her dead husband, her own brother, her infant child; of Hagen, to his nephew, the king, and to his own purposes; of the vassal, who carries out his pledge to Kriemhild at the expense of violating the sacred duty of hospitality.

Richard Wagner developed some of his finest operas around the legends of the Nibelungens. In *Siegfried* he adhered to the tale as here related; in the other musical dramas of the *Ring* series he takes the story where the treasure is hidden in the Rhine and given into the care of three lovely daughters of the river god, who cautions them never to disclose its whereabouts. Their careless remark to a stranger that he who can make a ring out of the gold can conquer the world arouses his cupidity. How the hoard brings misfortune to all who gain possession of it is

revealed in the Wagnerian operas, but this legend is not included in the Nibelunglied.

The Nibelungs are dwarfs or gnomes who dwell beneath the earth. Theirs is the great Nibelungen treasure which Siegfried wins in the first place, these little creatures thereby becoming his subjects. Later, when it is cast into the Rhine, they again are found with it. The vast wealth, which filled so many wagons when it was conveyed to Burgundy at the time that Gunther, instigated by the crafty Hagen, persuaded Kriemhild to bring it hither, carries with it a curse on whosoever shall remove it from the river. This is the fateful tale that is developed by Wagner.

The riddle is not hard to read; to primitive minds the discovery of gold in mountain veins implied that it had been accumulated by creatures, and to dwell in such small recesses they must of necessity be tiny beings—gnomes. The sturdy forest-dwellers observed that those who came to be possessed of much wealth lost their vitality, ceased to love the rugged life of the woods and tended to deteriorate. This led to the simple conclusion that gold carried with it a curse for those who wrenched it from its first possessors, the Nibelungs, who dwelt within the mountains and heaped together the precious ore.

“You know the Nibelungen Lied? That expresses, I believe, the key-note of the old Teuton’s heart, after his work was done. Siegfried murdered by his brother-in-law; fair Khriemhild turned into an avenging fury; the heroes hewing each other down, they scarce know why, in Hunnish Etzel’s hall, till Hagen and Gunther stand alone; Dietrich of Bern going in, to bind the last surviving heroes; Khriemhild shaking Hagen’s gory head in Gunther’s face, himself hewed down by the old Hildebrand, till nothing is left but stark corpses and vain tears:—while all the while the Nibelungen hoard, the cause of all the woe, lies drowned in the deep Rhine until the judgment day. What is all this, but the true tale of the fall of Rome, of the mad quarrels of the conquering Teutons? The names are confused, mythic; the dates and places all awry; but the tale is true—too true. *Mutato nomine fabula narratur.* Even so they

went on, *killing*, till none were left. Deeds as strange, horrible, fratricidal, were done, again and again, not only between Frank and Goth, Lombard and Gepid, but between Lombard and Lombard, Frank and Frank. Yes, they were drunk with each other's blood, those elder brethren of ours. Let us thank God that we did not share their booty, and perish, like them, from the touch of the fatal Nibelungen hoard."¹

¹ Chas. Kingsley.

FROM THE LAY OF THE NIBELUNGS

To us, in olden legends, is many a marvel told
Of praise-deserving heroes, of labours manifold,
Of weeping and of wailing, of joy and festival;
Ye shall of bold knights' battling now hear a wondrous tale.

A very noble maiden grew up in Burgundy;
Than hers no greater beauty in any land might be:
The maid was called Kriemhilda— a woman passing fair—
For whose sake many a warrior his life must needs forbear.

To love that lovely maiden seem'd but to be her due;
None bore her spite, and many did for her favour sue.
Fair were beyond all measure her noble form and face:
Her virtues were sufficient all womankind to grace.

Three noble kings and wealthy guarded her as their own:
Sir Gunther and Sir Gernot, for deeds of honour known,
And Giselher the youngest, a gallant warrior he:
The lady was the sister and ward of all the three. . . .

Their mother was Dame Uté, a queen exceeding rich,
And Dankrat was their father, broad lands he left to each
When he this life departed; he was a mighty man,
Who, e'en while yet a stripling, his knightly deeds began. . . .

Meanwhile, amid this splendour, the maid Kriemhilda dreamed
That she had reared a falcon,— strong, fair and wild he seem'd—
And that two eagles rent him before her very eyes;—
No worse grief could life bring her in any evil guise.

Quick to her mother Uté she told the vision dread,—
Who, after her own manner, the dream interpreted:
"This falcon of thy rearing, thy noble husband he,—
And now may God defend him, or he is lost to thee!"

“What sayest thou of husbands, O dearest mother mine?
Never for hero’s wooing shall I, your daughter, pine!
Spotless and fair would I be, as now, unto my death;—
I would forego the sorrow that lurks man’s love beneath.”

“Forswear not Love thus lightly,” her mother answer gave,
“If heart’s joy ever reach thee in life, as women crave,
Through man’s love thou must gain it;—thou wert a seemly bride
If God do not deny thee a good knight at thy side.”

“Ah, let alone such counsel, my mother dear, I pray!
By many a woman’s witness ’tis proven, clear as day,
How heart’s delight too often with sorrow sore is paid;—
Lest such mischance befall me I’ll shun them both,” she said.

So, in her mind Kriemhilda held ever Love at bay,
And lived in happy freedom for many a merry day;—
Caring for nought and no one;— and yet it was her fate
To be one day, in honour, a gallant warrior’s mate.

* * * * *

In Netherland was growing a rich king’s son and heir,
Whose father’s name was Siegmund, Sieglind his mother fair.
In a strong castle lived they, of far and widespread fame,
Beside the great Rhine river; and Santen was its name.

This prince’s name was Siegfried, a gallant knight and good,
In many kingdoms proved he his brave and warlike mood;
So great his strength of body, he rode from land to land.
Ha! what fine warriors found he on the Burgundian strand! . . .

The Prince was little troubled by pangs of heartache yet!
The people’s talk, however, ere long his ears beset:
How there was in Burgundia a maiden passing fair;—
For her sake joy and sorrow thereafter he did bear.

The beauty of this maiden was faméd far and wide;
Her lofty mind, ’twast vaunted, excelled her beauty’s pride,
And brought her many a wooer, riding to Gunther’s land,
Who fain would see the damsel, and bid for that fair hand.

And yet, however many contended for her love,
 Kriemhilda felt in secret that none her heart could move;
 There was no man among them whose love she could reward;
 That knight was still a stranger, who was to be her lord.

But when the son of Sieglind to lofty love inclined,
 Compared with his, all wooing was as an idle wind!
 Right well, in sooth, deserved he to win so fair a bride:
 Erelong the noble Kriemhilda stood at bold Siegfried's side.

His followers and kinsmen, seeing that he would wed,
 Did counsel that the maiden he to the altar led
 Should be by birth his equal,— for his, and for their sake:
 "Then," cried the gallant Siegfried, "Kriemhilda will I take!

"That beauteous young maiden of the Burgundian land,
 For her surpassing beauty. Right well I understand
 No Kaiser were so mighty but, should he need a wife,
 That princess were fit consort to share his royal life." . . .

Upon the seventh morning, at Worms, on the Rhine shore,
 Arrived the gallant horsemen; the raiment that they wore
 With ruddy gold was flashing, and all their trapping shone:
 The chargers of bold Siegfried went pacing smoothly on.

Their bucklers were new-wrought ones, and light and broad beside,
 And bright their helmets glittered, as unto court did ride
 Siegfried, the gallant chieftain, in royal Gunther's land.
 Such fine-apparelled heroes were ne'er seen on that strand. . . .

All gilded were the bridles they lightly held in hand;
 And silken were their horse-girths; so came they to that land.
 The folk began on all sides on them to gape and stare,
 Then many of Gunther's people ran forth to meet them there. . . .

Then was the king astonished, and much he did inquire,
 Whence came these splendid warriors, in dazzling bright attire,
 And, with such well-wrought bucklers, so new and eke so broad;—
 It vexed the soul of Gunther that none could give him word. . . .

The host and all his warriors received the guest so well
 That nothing to good breeding was lacking, sooth to tell.
 The goodly man, on his side, bowed low before them there,
 And thanked them for their greeting so friendly and so fair.

“I marvel at these riddles,” spake Gunther, suddenly,
 “Whence have you, noble Siegfried, come unto this country?
 And for what purpose come you to Worms upon the Rhine?”
 The guest unto the king said: “To answer shall be mine.

“To me were told the tidings, erst in my fatherland,
 That here with you you were dwelling (which I would know
 first-hand,)

The boldest of all warriors— oft said they so to me,—
 That ever monarch governed: lo, I am come to see!

“Thy fame hath also reached me; I hear the knights declare
 That never king was bolder nor braver, anywhere.
 Such is the common folk-talk o’er all the land, in sooth,
 And I shall have no quiet until I know the truth. . . .”

Loud spake the country’s ruler: “All that we have is yours,
 What ye desire, in honour, we’ll call no longer ours,
 But gladly share it with you, be it or wealth, or blood.”
 This wrought in good Sir Siegfried a somewhat softer mood.

The knights were soon relieved of all the gear they brought;
 And lodgement was found for them,— the very best was sought
 For Siegfried’s knightly followers; well were they lodged that
 day.

And now, in all Burgundia, right welcome guests were they.

All honour too was shown them, on that and many a day,
 A thousand times more honour than I can ever say!
 This had his boldness gained him; and this is true I state:
 That seldom any saw him who long could bear him hate.

On pastimes now and pleasure the kings and court were set.
 But, whatsoe’er they started, he outstript all men yet:
 For none could equal Siegfried, nor come his strength anear,—
 Whether it were stone-putting, or shooting with the spear. . . .

When in the court the young folk their warlike games began,
 The knights and their attendants, Kriemhilda straightway ran
 And watched them from the window, king’s daughter tho’ she
 were,

Nor while it lasted did she for other pastime care.

And had he known she watched him, whom in his heart he bore,
 It had been ample pleasure,— he would have asked no more.
 And could his eyes have seen her, ye need not to be told
 No better bliss and greater for him this world could hold. . . .

And many a time he pondered: “How shall I e’er attain
 To see the noble damsel, whose love I seek to gain,
 Her whom I love so dearly, and have for many a day?
 To me she’s still a stranger, with sorrow I must say.”

* * * * *

’Twas on a Whitsun morning; one saw them all go by,
 All festively apparelled, and mounted gallantly:
 Five thousand men, and upwards, to join the revels ride.
 And many a pleasant contest began on ev’ry side.

The host was not unmindful, and well did understand
 How heartily and truly the prince of Netherland
 Love-bound was to his sister, whom yet he had not seen;—
 A match for whom in beauty no maiden yet had been.

Then to the king did Ortwein the thane, his thought unfold:
 “If you, with fullest honour, this festival would hold,
 You should allow our brave guests our winsome maids to see
 Who are, in truth, the glory and pride of Burgundy.

For where would man’s delight be, and what could charm his
 life,
 If there were no fair maidens, and ne’er a comely wife?
 Now, therefore, let your sister before your guests appear.”
 This was a pleasing counsel to many a hero’s ear!

“Most gladly will I do this,” replied the king straightway,
 And all who heard him answer had merry hearts that day.
 He sent to summon Uté, and eke her daughter fair,
 And bade them with their maidens at once to court repair. . . .

Then came the lovely maiden: even as morning-red
 From sombre clouds outbreaking. And many a sorrow fled
 From him whose heart did hold her, and eke so long had held:
 When thus the winsome fair one before him he beheld.

Upon her raiment glittered full many a precious stone:
 Her rosy blushing colour with lovely radiance shone.
 Though any would deny it he could not but confess,
 That on this earth he never had seen more loveliness.

Even as the moon in brightness exceeds the brightest stars,
 And shining out so clearly athwart the clouds appears,
 So stood she there excelling full many a lady fair;
 Then in the gallant heroes their hearts uplifted were. . . .

When the high-couraged warrior she saw before her there,
 Her cheeks were lit with crimson: then spake the maiden fair:
 "Be welcome here, Sir Siegfried, thou good and noble knight."
 And when he heard her greeting his heart grew wondrous
 light. . . .

"Now God reward you, Siegfried," thus spake the child so fair,
 "Right well have you deserved that all the warriors here
 Do love and serve you truly, as they themselves avow."
 Right tenderly began he to look on Kriemhilda now.

"For ever will I serve you!" declared the warrior,
 "Henceforth my head I'll never lay down to rest before
 Your least wish be accomplished, if life be granted me;
 All this, my lady Kriemhilda, for your dear sake shall be."

* * * * *

Before the great Rhine ruler did of the water take,
 Sir Siegfried went unto him a due request to make:
 To warn him of his promise, which he, by his right hand
 Pledged, ere he saw Brunhilda at home in Isenland.

He spake: "You must remember, you swore by your right hand,
 If ever Dame Brunhilda should come to this your land,
 You'd give to me your sister; now what hath got your oath?
 Much trouble with your journey I've taken, nothing loth."

Then to his guest the king said: "Thou didst right well to
 speak;—

What on my hand I swore you, that oath I will not break.
 As best I can, I'll help you to bring about this thing."
 Then was Kriemhilda summon'd to court before the king. . . .

Thereon did speak King Gunther: "Dear sister, noble maid,
I trust unto thy goodness to let mine oath be paid.
I've pledged thee to a warrior; should he become thy Lord,
By thy true faith and duty thou wilt have kept my word!"

Then spake the noble maiden; "Belovéd brother mine,
Thou shouldst not thus beseech me; my will is ever thine
To do as thou commandest; what thou hast will'd shall be:
I'll take, my lord, for husband, him whom thou giv'st to
me." . . .

So he to her was plighted, and unto him the maid.
And now the loving damsel no longer was afraid
Within the arms of Siegfried in sweet embrace to rest.
And then, before the heroes, his beauteous queen he kiss'd.

* * * * *

Now that the guests departing all on their way were sped,
Siegfried the son of Siegmund unto his people said:
"We likewise must make ready home to our land to go."
Well liked his wife these tidings, when she the news did
know. . . .

Then was a great leave-taking, of squire as well as knight,
Of maiden and of matron: as was indeed but right.
Friend kissing friend at parting was seen on every hand:
Right gaily they departed from out King Gunther's land. . . .

Before his friends and kinsmen then noble Siegmund spake:
"I charge all Siegfried's kinsfolk notice hereby to take,
That he, before these warriors, my crown henceforth shall wear."
This news the Netherlanders were glad in sooth to hear.

To him he gave his kingdom, his crown, and government.
Henceforth he was their master. And his arbitrament
And rendering of justice became abiding law;—
So that fair Kriemhilda's husband was greatly held in awe.

In this estate of honour, he lived, as all declare,
And wore the crown and govern'd,— until, in the tenth year,
His comely wife in safety brought forth her first-born son;
Whereat the royal kinsfolk were gladden'd ev'ryone.

They hasten'd to baptize him, and gave him for a name,
 After his uncle, Gunther, which could not bring him shame.
 Were he but as his forbears, a brave man he would grow.
 They gave him careful training, as bounden so to do.

About the self-same season Dame Siegling pass'd away.
 Then noble Uté's daughter did over all hold sway,—
 As doth beseem such ladies who wealth and lands possess.
 That Death the queen had taken they mournéd none the less.

Now yonder too, in Rhineland,— so doth the story run,—
 Unto the wealthy Gunther there had been born a son
 Of beauteous Brunhilda, in realm of Burgundy;
 And, for the love of Siegfried, that hero's name had he.

The kingdom of the Niblungs was under Siegfried's sway—
 Among his wealthy kinsfolk there was no wealthier aye—
 And Schilbung's warriors also, and all their goods and gold.
 Well might the gallant warrior his head more highly hold.

• • • • •

Now may you of this treasure a wondrous story hear:
 It took a dozen wagons it from the mount to bear;
 Four days and nights they ceased not to carry it away;
 And each must make the journey, so laden, thrice a day.

Naught else but gold and jewels within this treasure lay;
 And had one taken from it what would the whole world pay,
 'Twould not have seem'd to eyesight of one mark's value quit.
 Ay! Not without some reason did Hagen covet it.

The gem of all lay lowest— a little rod of gold.
 Whoever understood it he might the mastery hold
 In all the world's dominions, o'er every race of men.
 Of Albrich's kinsmen many did follow Gernot then.

As soon as they had carried the hoard to Gunther's land,
 And thus the queen had taken the whole into her hand,
 The storerooms and the towers were full as they could hold.
 Never of such vast treasure the marvel hath been told.

And even were the treasure increased a thousand fold,
 And she once more might Siegfried in health and strength
 behold,

Gladly to him would Kriemhilda have empty-handed gone:
 For never could a hero a truer wife have won. . . .

But to the king said Hagen: "No prudent man and wise
 Would leave to such a woman a treasure of this size.
 In gifts we'll see her spend it and squander the whole store,
 And then the bold Burgundians may rue it evermore."

Then answer'd him King Gunther: "To her an oath I swore
 That I to her would never do any evil more;
 And that will I abide by, for she my sister is."
 But thereunto said Hagen: "Let me be blamed for this."

The oaths that they had taken they reckon'd all for naught.
 And from the widow's keeping the mighty hoard they brought,
 And quietly did Hagen of all the keys get hold.
 Wroth was her brother Gernot when he the truth was told. . . .

Before the mighty king came back to his home again,
 Hagen had meanwhile managed the treasure great to gain.
 Down in the Rhine at Lochheim he sank it bodily.
 He hoped yet to enjoy it: but that was not to be. . . .

They one and all said: "Hagen hath done us a foul wrong."
 Then from the princes' anger he kept aloof for long,
 Till he regain'd their favour; and so they left him free:
 Yet never to Kriemhilda could he more hateful be. . . .

After the death of Siegfried, as verily appears,
 With many troubles burthen'd she dwelt for thirteen years;
 And all the while could never forget the warrior dead.
 She aye was faithful to him: that all the people said.

BEAST EPICS

BEAST fables seem to be wellnigh as old as humanity itself. They have been traced back to India, which would appear to be their native home. Thence they were carried into many lands by the Indo-Europeans. Tradition has dubbed Æsop the "Father of Fable," but scientific investigation, that ruthless destroyer of edifying conceptions, would lead us to question old Æsop's very existence. At best he may have made the fable popular in Greece; certainly he did not invent it.

Æsop is as obscure a person as Homer; just as we cling to the probability of the one, so are we prone to accept the other, persistent tradition usually having some basis in fact. It is said that Æsop was a slave, born in Samos, whether at the close of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century before Christ is not known. He did not, in all probability, commit anything to writing but transmitted his fables orally. There is a tradition that he was badly misshapen and deformed; this is interpreted by those who find a logical reason for everything as being an effort to bring him nearer to the animals of which he talked: to give him more acute understanding and sympathy with them.

Socrates employed part of his time in prison in turning the fables credited to Æsop into verse; Demetrius made a collection of them about 300 B. C., while in the last century before our era one Babrius turned them into poetry. It is from his version that our familiar fables are derived. His work was lost for ages and only in 1843 was a copy of it discovered in an old monastery at Mount Athos.

In times when it was dangerous to express one's opinions regarding current affairs, it was still possible to communicate the essence of them under guise of a beast fable, and this kind of story has generally been popular under such

unhappy political conditions. The humble, lacking influence and the means to defend themselves, have found it safest to be discreet in the words they uttered, particularly in ancient times when they were ever relegated to the background and pushed aside if they made the slightest effort to assert their rights. Nevertheless, like children who are quick to detect justice or injustice, truth or falsity, they were keen judges of those in higher social position. What could not be said outright with safety could be covertly suggested by an episode set into the mouths of birds or animals. That such stories mean something not said directly is evident to even the obtuse. For this reason the fox, who tries his best to reach the grapes and, failing, dismisses them with the comment that they are sour anyway, is recognized as exhibiting human propensities. The wolf who attempts first to find legitimate reasons for devouring the lamb and, these being refuted, devours it regardless, illustrates the type well known in all ages who get wrongfully when they cannot obtain their desires legitimately.

Lessons of kindness were sometimes taught by these fables, as for example, in the one told of the lion and the mouse. The sleeping lion is wakened by the mouse and in anger is about to sniff out its life, when the tiny creature begs to be spared on the ground that he might some day serve the lion. Doubtless the absurdity of the presumption caused the lion to desist from injuring him. Nevertheless, the lion later becomes ensnared in a net and the grateful mouse gnaws the rope and sets him free.

In the Middle Ages the beast fables, like the legends of the saints, served for the entertainment and instruction of the masses, keenly satirizing the frailties of the dominating classes. The best known of the beast epics is *Reynard the Fox*, which comprises many individual stories linked into one lengthy tale possessing considerable unity and directness of plot. The story is this: King Noble, the Lion, king of the animal world, convenes his subjects around him. They come, all but Reynard the Fox. Just as the assemblies of Teuton chiefs gave occasion for hearing complaints from those who had suffered injury, so was this the opportunity for the animals to proffer complaint against Herr Fox, who

had incurred enmity of them all save the Badger, his cousin. After several beasts had set forth their grievances against him, the Badger attempted to minimize the injury inflicted by his kinsman, explaining that whereas one of them protested that the Fox had taken sausage away from him, he had himself previously stolen it; whereas the Wolf complained bitterly against the Fox, yet on past occasions he had shared the spoils that the Fox purloined and ate all the fish save the bones and all the porker save the hook, leaving the Fox without food. The King was disposed to think that matters had been exaggerated to him when in came a procession of fowls, bearing a dead hen on a bier, the cock and other hens mourning her demise. This was direct testimony of the Fox's craftiness, for he had encouraged the fowls to roam at large until they had become indifferent to him and then suddenly he revived his depredations.

King Noble dispatches three different messengers in turn after the criminal—first the Bear, enjoining him not to fall a victim to the blandishments of Herr Fox. The Bear disdains such warnings; yet, when he arrives at the Fox's retreat and the latter pities him because he was sent on such a long hot journey and invites him to have some honey, the Bear completely forgets all he has heard and becomes another ready victim; similarly the Cat suffers harm. Finally the Badger actually succeeds in bringing the arrogant Fox to court where his case is heard and he is sentenced to be executed. Never daunted, he bemoans the fact that he was just about to set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and slyly lets fall a remark about some riches whose secret resting place is known to him alone. Instantly the King is alert to learn their whereabouts and presently, at the request of the Queen, whose interest in the poor condemned Fox is awakened, he is pardoned, presumably to depart on a pilgrimage and become a pious creature; in reality to continue his inflictions of injury upon the wood-folk, right and left. A second time he is brought before the court and again is released. In desperation the Wolf, the chief complainant, summons him to a duel, believing it behooves him to take justice into his own hands. The Fox is made ready for the combat by his devoted fam-

ily; he is made sleek with oil; his brushy tail is filled with water to be flung in the Wolf's eyes and through his agility and stealth he triumphs over his adversary.

The whole tale abounds with satire: the one who complains of another is nevertheless ready to share in his ill-gotten gain; the righteous, who would bring the erring back to the path of duty, yield to temptation as soon as advantage offers; the crafty use the cloak of piety to cover their ill deeds; the hypocrite seeks by making a pilgrimage to atone for much wrong; in court the innocent are punished and the guilty set free; the ear of the avaricious is quickly caught by the mention of magical gold.

In the nineteenth century, when attention was drawn to these mediæval stories and they were given new dress by modern writers, Goethe assembled the various stories of Reynard the Fox and wrote the version best known today. The following citations are taken from the translation of his production by Thomas Arnold.

This old fable is believed to have been brought by the Franks into Western Europe when they pressed south from their earlier home beyond the Rhine. King Noble assembled his companions, heard the complaints of his subjects and conducted affairs in some such manner as did the Frankish King. It is evident that portions relating to pilgrimages and the like were added after long contact with Christianity.

Fondness for stories wherein animals are made to think, talk and act after the manner of men, particularly when they ridicule human weaknesses, is still manifested in the popularity of the *Jungle Stories*, the stories of Uncle Remus, and Rostand's play *Chanticleer*.

FROM REYNARD THE FOX

THE ACCUSATION

The pleasant feast of Whitsuntide was come;
The woods and hills were clad in vernal bloom;
The full-awakened birds, from every tree,
Made the air ring with cheerful melody;
Sweet were the meadows after passing showers;
Brilliant the heaven with light, the earth with flowers.

Noble, the King of Beasts, now holds his Court;
Thither his summoned Vassals all resort;
From North and South they troop, from East and West,
Of Birds and Quadrupeds the First and Best.
The Royal will had been proclaimed, that all
Of ev'ry class should come, both Great and Small:
Not One should fail; and yet there did fail One;
Reynard the Fox, the Rogue, was seen of none;
His many crimes from Court kept him away;
An evil conscience shuns the light of day.
To face that grave Assembly much he feared,
For all accused him; no one had he spared:
Greybeard, the Badger, stood his friend alone,
The Badger, who was Reynard's Brother's son. . . .

Sir Isegrim, the Wolf, enters complaint.

Had I the tongues of Angels, lungs of brass,
Whole days and weeks—nay, months and years would pass,
Ere I could mention all my injuries,
Or tell one half his crimes and tricks and lies.
If all the Sheep on earth were killed and flayed,
And all their skins were into parchment made,
Not half sufficient were they to contain,
The wrongs whereof I justly could complain. . . .

The Dog, the Cat and Panther all enter their complaints.

Undaunted by his host of angry Foes,
The Badger, Reynard's Nephew, now uprose;

Boldly prepared to plead his Uncle's cause,
All stained with crime and falsehood as he was.

"Now fair and soft, Sir Isegrim," said he;
"Your words smack less of truth than enmity.
'T is known you hate my Uncle; and, in sooth,
A fair word had he ne'er from your foul mouth.
Yet from your malice hath he nought to fear:
In the King's favour stood he now but here,
He'd give you ample reason to repent
Stirring in these stale subjects of complaint.
You take good care too not to say one word
Of ills that he for your sake hath incurred.
Yet many of the Barons here well know
What happened not so very long ago;
When you and he a solemn covenant sware,
Both, like true Comrades, Good and Ill should share.
I must relate, it is not long to tell,
The strange adventure which that time befell,
When you and he, in the cold winter weather,
Went through the country travelling together.

"It chanced a Carter, on the King's high road,
Was driving homeward with a heavy load;
Your subtle nostrils soon sniffed out 't was fish,
You'd soon have had them if you'd had your wish:
But they were closely packed; and what was worse,
You'd not a single stiver in your purse.
What then did my kind-hearted Uncle do?
Ah! what indeed hath he not done for you?
Down in the road he laid himself for dead:
'Twas a bold thought to come into his head!
And when the Carter saw him lying there,
To kill him out-an-end did he prepare;
But, cunning Reynard still held in his breath,
Stiff'ning his limbs and counterfeiting death;
'Twas a consummate masterpiece of art,
That showed him cool of head as brave of heart;
The Carter picked him up, and pitched him in his cart.
A cap he thought to make out of his skin,
And a bag too, to keep his dollars in.
This did my Uncle do for Isegrim:
When would he venture such a risk for him?
While onward went the Carter with his load,
Reynard kept throwing fish down in the road;

And Isegrim, who was in haste to sup,
 Fast as he threw them down, gobbled them up.
 Reynard grew weary of this sport at last,
 And thought 'twas his turn now to break his fast;
 So down he sprang; but with disgust and wonder
 Found Isegrim had pilfered all the plunder:
 He'd stuffed till he was nigh to burst in sunder.
 He told my Uncle he had left his share—
 But nothing but the heads and bones were there.

* * * * *

*Sir Bruin is dispatched to bring Reynard to Court and
 arrives finally at the latter's retreat.*

At length Sir Bruin stood before the gate,
 And finding it was shut, he scratched his pate,
 Not knowing whether best to go or wait.
 Then he began to cry with mighty din;
 "What, cousin Reynard, ho! are you within?
 Bruin the Bear it is who calls. I bring
 A missive from our Sovereign Lord, the King:
 He orders you, all bus'ness laid aside,
 Repair to Court and there your doom abide,
 That equal right and justice may be done,
 And satisfaction giv'n to every one.
 I am to fetch you: if you hesitate,
 The gallows or the wheel will be your fate.
 Better to come at once, fair cousin, sith
 The King, you know, will not be trifled with." . . .

Reynard suspected there might be some cheat;
 For the Deceitful always fear deceit.
 Was Bruin quite alone? He felt afraid,
 There might be others hid in ambuscade.
 But soon as he was fully satisfied
 His fears were vain, forth from the door he hied;
 And, "Welcome, dearest Uncle, here"; quoth he,
 With studied look of deep humility,
 And the most jesuitical of whispers,
 "I heard you call; but I was reading Vespers.
 I am quite grieved you should have had to wait,
 In this cold wind too, standing at my gate.
 How glad I am you're come; for I feel sure
 With your kind aid, my cause will be secure;
 However that may be, at least, I know

More welcome nobody could be than you.
But truly 'twas a pity I must say
T'have sent you such a long and tedious way.
Good Heav'ns! how hot you are! you're tired to death!
How wet your hair is, and how scant your breath!
Although no slight our good King could have meant,
Some other Messenger he might have sent
Than Bruin, the chief glory of his Court,
His kingdom's main adornment and support.
Though I should be the last to blame his choice,
Who have, in sooth, no cause but to rejoice.
How I am slandered well aware am I,
But on your love of Justice I rely,
That you will speak of things just as you find them;
As to my Enemies I need not mind them:
Their malice vainly shall my cause assail;
For Truth, we know, is great, and must prevail,

“To Court to-morrow we will take our way:
I should myself prefer to start to-day,
Not having cause—why should I have?—to hide;
But I am rather bad in my inside.
By what I've eaten I am quite upset,
And nowise fitted for a journey yet.”

“What was it?” asked Sir Bruin, quite prepar'd,
For Reynard had not thrown him off his guard.

“Ah!” quoth the Fox, “what boots it to explain?
E'en your kind pity could not ease my pain,
Since flesh I have abjured, for my soul's weal,
I'm often sadly put to't for a meal.
I bear my wretched life as best I can;
A Hermit fares not like an Alderman.
But yesterday, as other viands failed,
I ate some honey,—see how I am swelled!
Of that there's always to be had enough:
Would I had never touch'd the cursed stuff.
I ate it out of sheer necessity;
Physic is not so nauseous near to me.”

“Honey!” exclaimed the Bear; “did you say honey?
Would I could any get for love or money!
How can you speak so ill of what's so good?
Honey has ever been my fav'rite food;
Do get me some on't; and you may depend
You'll make me evermore your steadfast friend.”

THE TRIAL

Soon as 't was known by general report

Reynard was really coming to the Court,
Out they all rushed in haste, both Great and Small,
Eager to see the famous Criminal:
In flocks and herds and droves they thronged to meet him,
But scarce did one with word of welcome greet him.

Reynard cared little though for this: he thought—
Or seem'd at least to think—it mattered nought.
With Greybeard on indiff'rent things he talked
As bold as brass, along the street he walked;
He could not, had he been the King's own Son,
Free from all crime, with prouder step have gone:
And so before the King and all his Peers
He stood, as though he felt nor doubts nor fears.

"Dread Lord and gracious Sov'reign!" thus said he,
"For ever gracious have You proved to me;—
Therefore I stand before You, void of fear,
Sure that my tale with patience you will hear;—
A more devoted Servant to the Crown,
Than I have been, my Liege hath never known;
'Tis this brings me such hosts of Enemies,
Who strive to work me mischief in Your eyes;
And bitter reason should I have to grieve,
Could You one half their calumnies believe.
But high and just and righteous all Your views are;
You hear th' Accused, as well as the Accuser:
Howe'er behind my back they slander me,
You know how great is my integrity."

"Silence that lying tongue!" the Monarch cries,
"Nor think to veil your crimes with sophistries.
In one career of vice your life is spent;
It calls aloud to Heav'n for punishment. . . .

Now hear what lying tales the Fox dared state,
To screen himself, and others inculpate;
To what base falsehoods utterance he gave,
Slandered his very Father in the grave,
Traduced the Badger too, his staunchest Friend;
He thought all means were sanctioned by the end;
So he could but get credit for his lies,
And have revenge upon his Enemies. . . .

“He ceased: a murmur ran through all the crowd;
But what all thought, none dared to speak aloud.
The King and Queen both felt a strong desire
This wondrous store of treasure to acquire;
They call’d the Fox aside and bade him say
In what place he had stowed it all away.

Though Reynard found it hard his joy to hide,
Still in desponding accents he replied;
“Why should I tell this secret to my Lord,
Who dooms my death and ever doubts my word?
In Traitors he prefers his trust to place,
Whose triumph is achieved in my disgrace.”

“Nay,” said the Queen, impatient; “nay, not so!
His vengeance just my Lord may yet forego,
The past he may forgive, may e’en forget;
And you may live a life of credit yet;
Could he but have some certain pledge, that you
Would for the future loyal prove and true.”

“Ah gracious Queen!” the wily Fox replies,
“Let me find favor in King Noble’s eyes;
Through your mild influence let me pardoned be,
And hence depart in life and member free;
Amplly will I atone for all my crimes;
Nor King nor Kaiser lives of modern times
Can truly boast one half the wealth to own,
Which I will lay before my Sov’reign’s throne.”

“Believe him not!” the angry Monarch cries;
“Whose lips ne’er open but to utter lies.
If he would teach you how to cheat or thief,
His words you then might readily believe.”

And the Queen said—“Let not my Lord be wroth:
Though Reynard’s life ill augurs for his truth;
Yet surely this time hath he spoken sooth.
His Father and his Uncle hath he not
Shown to have shared in that accursed plot?
He might have sure devised some stratagem,
While blaming others, to exon’rate them.
And if he do speak truth, how great a prize
We lose, if now with him his secret dies.”

Awhile the Monarch paused, immersed in thought,
In his soul’s depths as though he counsel sought.
Then answered—“If you think ’t were better so,
Nor deem that ill from such a course may flow,

I may pursue the bent of my own mind,
To mercy more than vengeance still inclin'd.
The Culprit I will pardon, and restore,
As a new Man, to all he held before.
This time I trust him—let him though take heed—
This time I trust him, for the last indeed;
For by my Father's crown I make a vow,
If with false tidings he deceive me now,
On all who claim his kin, where'er they be,
My wrath shall fall, e'en to the tenth degree,
In torture shall they perish utterly."

Seeing the King so easily was sway'd,
Reynard took heart and spake out undismay'd:
"To lie now were most criminal, no doubt;
When I should be so speedily found out."

Thus the sly Knave the Royal pardon won,
Both for his Father's treasons and his own.
Freed from the gallows and his Enemies,
Great was his joy, nor less was their surprise.

"Noblest of Kings!" he cried, "and best of Lords!
My gratitude is all too vast for words.
But the warm thanks of this poor heart are given
To You, and your august Spouse, next to Heaven.
My life You spare; my wealth is but Your due;
For life and wealth alike belong to You.
The favors heaped on my unworthy self
Far, far outweigh all thoughts of paltry pelf.
To You as a free gift I now make o'er
The whole of good King Emmerick's mighty store.
Then listen, Sire, while I its hiding place
By certain signs enable You to trace.

"Now mark me! Far in Flanders, to the east,
There lies a wild inhospitable waste;
There grows a single copse named Husterlow,
Near it the waters of a fountain flow,
Called Krekelburn; these names remember well;
Why they're so call'd is more than I can tell.
It is a savage and romantic scene,
Where foot of Beast hath ne'er or rarely been;
There dwell alone the Owl, the Bat, the Jay;
And there it was I stow'd my wealth away.
Remember, Sire, close each to each they lie,
The copse, and the spring Krekelburn hard by.

Yourself and Royal Spouse had best go there,
 It were not safe to send a Messenger;
 'Twere far too great a risk to trust a Stranger;
 And with the truest Friend not much less danger.
 Now further mark my words: at Krekelburn
 Sharp to the left you take a sudden turn;
 A stone's throw off two birches shall you see,
 Their pensile branches drooping gracefully;
 Directly up to these then must you go;
 There delve forthwith; the treasure lies below.
 At first but moss you'll find about the roots,
 But soon your toil will meet with richer fruits;
 Heaps of red gold you'll find; in ingots part,—
 Part fabricated by the Goldsmith's art;
 Among it will be seen King Emmerick's crown.
 Which silly Bruin hoped to call his own;
 And many a costly chain and jewel rare,
 Far more than I can reckon up, are there.
 Then, gracious Sire! when all this wealth You see,
 Will You not think with kindness on poor Me?
 'That honest Fox!' methinks I hear You say,
 'With so much skill to store his wealth away!
 'My blessing be upon him day and night!'"
 Thus Reynard spake, the wily Hypocrite.

And the King answered: "You must with me go,
 Or ne'er shall I find out this Husterlow?
 Of Lubeck and Cologne I've oft heard tell,
 Of Paris also and Aix-la-Chapelle;
 But never yet of Husterlow before,
 Or Krekelburn, until this very hour.
 How may I know that this is not again
 A pure invention of your subtle brain?"

Sadly perplexed and daunted sore to find
 Suspicion haunting still the Royal mind;
 "Ah, Sire!" exclaimed the Fox, "'tis all the same
 To hang a Dog as give him a bad name!
 A trip through Flanders sure is no such burden!
 'Tis not a pilgrimage beyond the Jordan!
 It is enough to drive one to despair,
 To find one's word so doubted everywhere!
 Haply there may be some one here in Court
 Who may avouch the truth of my report."

He looked around and call'd the Hare, who came—
 A timid terror trembling through his frame.

"Come hither, Master Puss!" the Fox began;
"Hold up your head, and look, Sir, like a Man!
The King desires to learn if aught you know
Of either Krekelburn or Husterlow:
Speak truly now, on your allegiance oath."

And the Hare answered—"Sire! I know them both.
Far off in Flanders in the waste they lie,
Husterlow first, and Krekelburn close by:
Husterlow is the name they give a copse,
Where crookback Simon had his working shops;
He coined false money; that was years ago.
It is a dreary spot, as well I know;
From cold and hunger there I've suffered much,
When flying from the cruel Beagles' clutch."

Quoth Reynard then; "Enough! you may retire.
I trust I now have satisfied you, Sire!"
And the King said to Reynard; "Be content:
My doubts were not to wound your feelings meant."
(He thought indeed by what the Hare had stated
The Fox's tale was quite corroborated.
And thus it is that many a man of sense
Will deal with the effect of evidence.)

"But you must with us go; for much I doubt
That else I ne'er shall find the treasure out."

"Dread Sire!" rejoined the Fox; "to go with You
Would be a source of pride and pleasure too!
But, sooth to speak, my company would be
A cause of sorrow to Your Majesty.
I hoped to 'scape exposure of this evil;
But I must speak the truth and shame the Devil.

"How Isegrim turned Monk, Sire, you have heard;
'Twas more to serve his belly, than the Lord.
Soon were his Brethren weary of his tricks;
Almost starved out; he ate enough for six;
And caring nothing for his wretched soul,
For flesh on fast-days would he rave and howl.
At last, one afternoon, about Mid-Lent,
He sent for me, and straight to him I went:
And I must needs confess that I was stagger'd
To see him look so sadly gaunt and haggard.
He thus entreated me, with tearful eyes,
'By all our loves, by all our kindred ties;

'Get me some food, or I shall die of famine!
 'Sweet Coz, you see the wretched plight I am in.'
 My heart was softened; for he is my kin;
 And in my weakness I committed sin:
 To the next town I hied and stole some meat;
 Placed it before the Wolf, and he did eat.
 But for my goodness ill was I repaid,
 By this vile Judas treach'rously betray'd.
 And I, for this offence, more heinous than
 All my past crimes, lie 'neath the Church's ban.
 But now I have escaped my threatened doom,
 I thought, with Your kind leave, to wend to Rome;
 By penitence and alms I there might hope
 To purchase absolution of the Pope;
 Thence, having kissed his Holiness's toe,
 I purposed to Jerusalem to go;
 With cockle hat and staff and sandal shoon;
 Why should a Fox not take a Palmer's tone?
 Returned, from all sins purged, I might with pride
 Then take my place, Sire, at Your honored side.
 But if perchance I ventured this today,
 Would not the pious Scandal-mongers say;
 'Lo! how the King seeks Reynard's company,
 'Whom he so lately had condemned to die;
 'And he still excommunicated too!'

But judge You, Sire, what may be best to do."

"Heav'ns!" cried the King, "how should I know all this?
 It were a sin to keep you here, I wis;
 The Hare, or some one else, can show the way:
 You have Our leave to go without delay.
 For worlds I'd not your pilgrimage prevent;
 Since I believe you truly penitent.
 May Heaven, which alone your heart can read,
 Prosper your purpose and your journey speed!"

* * * * *

Reynard again lapsing into his former ways is brought to a second trial, obtaining once again full pardon.

The Monarch seemed well pleased to be deceived,
 And all the Court as readily believed;
 So cleverly the Fox his falsehoods wove,
 That what he only said, he seemed to prove.

And Reynard's mind was wonderfully eased,
For he was free to wander where he pleased.

But Is'grim could his wrath no more restrain;
He gnashed his teeth, and thus began complain:
"My Liege, and can you once more yield belief
To this thrice damned Perjurer and Thief?
Perceive you not, Sire, that in boasting thus,
He but deludeth You and beardeth us?
Truth doth he from his very soul despise;
And all his wit is spent in feigning lies.
But I'll not let him off so lightly now;
What a false Knave he is I soon shall shew;
Him of three grievous crimes I now indiet;
And 'scape he shall not, even should we fight.
He talks of calling Witnesses forsooth;—
As though that were the way to get the Truth!
They might stand here and witness all the day;
He'd manage to explain their words away;
And there might be no Witnesses at times;
Should therefore all unpunished be his crimes?
But who will dare the Culprit to accuse,
When he is sure his time and suit to lose;
And from that time for ever, wrong or right,
Be a marked object for the Ruffian's spite?
E'en You Yourself, Sire, by experience know,
As well as we, what mischief he can do.
To-day I have him safe; he cannot flee;
So let him look to 't; he shall answer me!"

THE CHALLENGE

Thus Isegrim, the Wolf, commenced his plaint;
Though words would fail his mighty rage to paint;

"My Liege, this Reynard is a Scoundrel still,
He ever has been one, and ever will.
And there he stands, and dares my wrath defy,
Sland'ring myself and all my Family.
My black Beast has he ever been, through life!
What endless Evils has he wrought my wife!
He once contrived the poor Thing to persuade
Into a mill-pond through a bog to wade.
He promised she should gratify her wish,
And catch that day a multitude of Fish;
She'd but to slip her tail into the pond,
And leave it hanging close upon the ground;

Fast would the Fishes fix; she'd soon take more
 Than three besides herself could well devour.
 Partly she waded on, and partly swam,
 Till to the sluice she got beneath the dam:
 There, where the waters stood most still and deep,
 Should she her tail drop down, and quiet keep.
 Tow'rds ev'ning-tide there came a nipping breeze,
 And bitterly did it begin to freeze;
 She had not borne it long; but, in a trice,
 Her tail was fairly frozen in the ice.
 She thought 't was owing to the Fishes' weight
 She could not move it, and that all was right. . . .

Then to the Wolf he boldly thus spake out:
 'I stuff the Traitor's name back down your throat!
 Charge upon charge against me you devise,
 But I denounce them all as groundless lies;
 You offer battel now, and haply think
 That from the trial I in fear may shrink;
 But long I've wished this means my truth to prove;
 The challenge I accept! Lo! here my glove!"

Then Noble, King of Beasts, agreed to hold
 The gages proffered by these champions bold;
 And said, "Bring forth your Sureties now as bail
 That at to-morrow's fight you shall not fail,
 Both sides I've heard, but understand no more—
 Nay, less I may say—than I did before."

As Is'grim's Sureties stood the Cat and Bear,
 Tybalt and Bruin; those for Reynard were
 Greybeard and Monk, Martin's Son and Heir. . . .

THE DUEL

Now stand the Champions in the lists alone,
 While husht and still the anxious Crowd look on.

Wildly and savagely, with outstretched claws,
 With bristling hair, and wide-distended jaws,
 Is'grim, the Wolf, the onset first began,
 And, swift as thought, at his Opponent ran.
 The wily Fox dared not the charge abide,
 But, light of foot, sprang actively aside;
 Nor did he now his Aunt's advice forget;
 His bushy tail already had he wet;
 On ev'ry side this did he whisk and flirt,
 And so besmear it well with sand and dirt.

Thought Isegrim, 'I surely have him now;'
But Reynard dealt him so severe a blow,
Across his eyes, with his bedaggled tail,
That the Wolf's sight and hearing 'gan to fail.
'T was not the only time this trick he'd played;
Others this stinging ointment had essayed;
Isegrim's Children he half blinded so,
As has been hinted at some time ago.

Having to Is'grim's eyes this salve applied;
Again the wily Reynard sprang aside;
And taking care to run against the wind,
He stirred a mighty cloud of dust behind.
This filled the Wolf's eyes, that they smarted sore;
The more he rubbed, they smarted all the more.
Meanwhile the crafty Reynard did not fail
To ply with vigor his assiduous tail;
Lashing his Adversary left and right,
Till wholly he deprived him of his sight.
Faint he became, and dazed, and all confused:
The wary Fox quick his advantage used;
Seeing what tears his straining eye-balls wept,
On his unhappy Foe he fiercely leapt;
His hide, with teeth and talons, tore and gashed,
And ever with his tail his eyes he lashed.
While Is'grim, senseless, gropes about, the Fox,
With fleering taunts, thus his Opponent mocks;

"Sir Wolf, bethink you well that in your time
You have committed many a heinous crime:
How many a Lamb and other harmless Beast
Your maw have furnished with a guilty feast;
While I have borne the scandal and the blame,
And your bad deeds have sullied my good name;
But your iniquities henceforth shall cease;
And the poor Innocents may rest in peace.
A boon as gainful 'tis to you, as them,
Your further guilty progress now to stem;
Your only chance is this your soul to save;
Yet if my pardon you will humbly crave,
And freely own that vanquished now you are,
I will have mercy, and your life will spare."

He said; and griping hard his Foeman's throat,
Again his bleeding cheeks he fiercely smote.
But Is'grim's strength no longer idle lay;
He gave two vig'rous twists, and tore away.

But Reynard at his face once more lets fly,
And sharply striking him, tears out an eye:
A deep and ghastly wound; the smoking blood
Adown his cheek in crimson current flow'd.
"See!" quoth the taunting Fox; "he hath it now;
Avenged am I, and vanquished is my foe!"
But mad with pain and heedless of his wound,
The savage Wolf, with one tremendous bound,
On Reynard sprang, and bore him to the ground:

His saucy courage now began to quail,
His tricks and cunning nothing might avail;
With sudden snap, one of his foremost paws
The Wolf has seized fast in his gripping jaws;
And Reynard lay half dead with fear and pain,
While thousand thoughts swarmed darting through his brain;
Then Isegrim with hot and clammy breath,
And hollow voice, thus muttered 'tween his teeth;

"Thine hour is come! surrender on the spot!
Or death, upon the instant, is thy lot.
Thine hour is come! it little shall avail
To scratch the dust up, or bewet thy tail;
To shave thy hair; to smear thyself with grease;
Woe on thee, Miscreant! thou'st run out thy lease!
Thou'st wrought me countless ills; told many a lie;
Wounded me sorely, and torn out mine eye;
But now, escape thou shalt not; yield or die!"

Thought Reynard then; "This is an evil hour!
What shall I do on earth t' avoid his pow'r?
Me, if I yield not, will this Savage slay;
If I do yield, disgraced am I for aye.
I've earned his hate, for I've abused him still,
With wrong and insult, to my utmost skill."

Then, with sweet words and accents soft and smooth,
He strove his fierce Opponent's wrath to soothe;
"Hear me, good Uncle! I with joy will be
Your Vassal, I and all my Family;
A pilgrimage with pleasure, for your sake,
Unto the Holy Sepulchre I'll make;
I'll visit ev'ry church upon my track,
And endless absolutions bring you back;
Your soul to benefit these cannot fail;
Your blessed parents too they may avail;
Though they may now be in a better place;

Who is there does not need a saving Grace?
I'll honour you, as though the Pope you were;
The deepest and most solemn oaths will swear,
That I myself and all my Relatives
Shall do you homage for our goods and lives;
And suit and service will we yield to you,
More than to our liege King we even do.

“Take then my offer, Uncle, while you may;

And all the land shall quickly own your sway:
All that I catch myself, to you I'll bring;
Fish, Fowls, Ducks, Geese and Pigeons—everything!
Yourself, your Wife and Children, of all pelf
Shall have first choice, ere I will taste myself.
Your safety will I watch with anxious eye,
That harm or danger ne'er approach you nigh.
They call me cunning, powerful are you;
Together what great things may we not do!
What a confed'racy were this of ours!
Wisdom and Strength! who could withstand such pow'rs!
To join together *thus* though, but to fight—
That, dearest Uncle, never can be right!
This combat I had done my best to shun,
If but it might with honor have been done.
But, as the public challenge came from you,
What, in the name of honor, could I do?
My courtesy I've carried such a length,
I've not put forth one quarter of my strength:
For to myself I said, 'Now have a care;
'It is but right you should your Uncle spare.'
Had I but given way to hate or spleen,
How different the issue might have been!
You have not suffered much; if your poor eye
Have met with an untoward injury,
It happened by the purest accident,
For which, with all my soul, do I lament.
I know a simple and a certain cure,
In which you shall participate, be sure:
Or if the hurt be greater than my skill,
You'll have one comforting advantage still:
If you at any time would fain repose,
Only one window will you have to close;
While we, unless we always keep awake,
A double trouble have to undertake.

“Bethink you then, dear Uncle; all my Kin
Shall kneel before your feet, my grace to win:
Hère, in full Court, my Children and my Wife
From you shall pray my pardon and my life.
Here will I even publicly declare,
The crimes, I charged you with but slanders were;
That I have grossly lied; nay, I will vow,
That nought against your character I know;
That, for all future time, I never will
Or breathe or think against you aught of Ill.

“This freely will I do to soothe your ire:
What expiation can you more desire?
Kill me; and where will be the slightest good?
My Friends and Kindred will keep up the feud.
Spare me; and think how in renown you rise;
For all will deem you generous and wise.
Prove thus how truly noble is your mind;
Another chance you may not quickly find.
But do your pleasure; for you will, I see:—
To live or die is all the same to me!”

“False Fox!” replied the savage Wolf; “how fain
Thou from my grapple wouldst be loose again!
But were the world one lump of fire-tried gold,
And offered here, my vengeance to withhold,
I would not, base Dissembler, let thee go:
What value are thine oaths, full well I know.
What for thy Friends or Kindred do I care?
Their enmity methinks I well may bear.
Well might'st thou at my silly weakness scoff,
If protestations now could get thee off.
Of thy forbearance thou didst boasting speak!
How is't mine eye hangs bleeding on my cheek?
By thine infernal claws is not my hide
In twenty places scored and scarified?
When panting I was worn almost to death,
What leisure did'st thou grant to fetch my breath?
Pardon and Mercy! That is not the way
That Injury and Insult I repay!
Me thou hast basely wronged; and my poor Wife—
Ah! thou shalt pay the forfeit with thy life!”

Thus spake the Wolf; the crafty Fox meanwhile,
Who saw that nothing could be gained by guile,

Using the other hand he still had free,
Gripped hold of his Opponent savagely;
And in so very sensitive a part,
The startled Wolf howled with the sick'ning smart.
Swift then the Fox withdrew his other paw
From the huge chasm of that portentous jaw;
With both his Foeman hard and fast he clenched,
And lugged and scratched and haled and nipped and wrenched,
That Isegrim screamed out, till blood he spate,
And brake with pain into a seething sweat.

Glad Reynard deemed his conquest now secure;
Yet, tooth and nail, held firm, to make all sure;
While the Wolf, spent and sprawling undermost,
Stified and blind, himself gave up for lost.
The sanguine stream in copious currents flows,
Adown his beard, from eyes and mouth and nose.
Oh! not for heaps of wealth and boundless gold,
The triumph of that hour had Reynard sold!
I' th' dust the Wolf rolled, with dull, hollow sobs,
Gestures unseemly and convulsive throbs.

With wailings loud his Friends the Monarch prayed
He would command the combat might be stayed;
The King replied; "E'en so then let it be,
If you all wish it; 'tis all one to me."

Then Noble bids the Marshals of the list
To cause the Champions from the fight desist.
The Lynx and Libbard quick are at their post,
And Reynard as the Conqueror thus accost;
'Enough! the King doth now his mandate send
The combat shall conclude, the strife shall end.
He wills you spare the life of Isegrim,
And leave the issue of the day to Him,
If either of the Twain should lose his life;
We all had reason to regret the strife.
The vict'ry, Reynard, rests with you; we own
That you right nobly your devoir have done.

Then Reynard said; "To all my thanks I pay;
And gladly will the King's behests obey;
Too proud to do whatever he require:
Victor! what triumph can I more desire?
But that my cause I may not prejudice
I humbly crave to ask my Friends' advice."

Then Reynard's Friends with one accord replied;
"We think it best the King were satisfied."

And round him gathered in tumultuous flocks
 The Relatives of the victorious Fox;
 The Beaver and the Otter and the Ape,
 With Greybeard, wished him joy of his escape.
 And many greeted him as Friends, of those
 Who heretofore had been his dearest Foes;
 The Squirrel and the Weasel and the Stoat,
 The Ermine too, and some of lesser note,
 Who formerly would scarcely speak his name,
 Kindred with him are now too glad to claim.
 In fine, he found no end of Relatives,
 Who brought with them their Children and their wives;
 While Great and Little with each other vie,
 To lavish compliments and flattery.

In the World's circle fares it ever thus;
 Good wishes rain upon the Prosperous;
 But the unfortunate or needy Man
 May e'en get through his troubles as he can.

So fares it now; and all the Courtiers strive
 How honor to the Victor they may give.
 Some sing; some play the flute; the hautboy, some;
 Some blow the trumpet; others beat the drum;
 And his now num'rous Friends in chorus cry:
 "Hail! happy day of joy and victory!
 Hail; conqu'ring Hero! unto whom we trace
 The honor and renown of all our Race.
 How did we grieve when wounded there you lay!
 How glad we greet the issue of the fray!"

And Reynard answered: "Thanks, my worthy Friends;
 For all I've borne your kindness makes amends:"
 Then, while behind in swarming crowds they prest,
 Marched onward with the Marshals of the list;
 And thus with acclamations loud they bring
 The Conqueror in triumph to the King.

So soon as they arrived before the throne,
 The Fox with humble bearing knelt him down;
 But the good Monarch motioned him to rise,
 And then addressed him thus, in gracious wise:
 "The day is yours by right of victory;
 And from all forfeit We pronounce you free. . . . "

Now Reynard lives in honor and in state;
 Then let us all his wisdom imitate;

Eschew the Evil and select the Good:
This moral points our tale, when understood.
The truth with fables hath the Poet mixed,
That virtue in your hearts may be infixed;
And you who purchase and peruse this poem
May see the ways o' th' world, and learn to know 'em;
As it has been is now, and aye will be—
Here then ends Reynard's life and history;
And with a bow we here lay down our pen.
The Lord preserve us evermore. Amen!

THE CID

JUST as ballads grew up around the Celtic king, Arthur, and the Frankish noble, Roland, so in Spain Rodrigo Diaz was the popular hero concerning whom two hundred songs are believed to have once existed. These were not grouped together until the twelfth century and the oldest existing copy of them was made about a hundred years later.

Rodrigo Diaz is said to have belonged to one of the noblest of Castilian families. While yet a lad he was so incensed at an insult given his aged father by a nobleman that he accepted the challenge his father's advanced years prevented him from doing, fought the duel and killed his adversary. When the Saracens invaded the realm, it was his boldness and courage that led to their defeat, five Moorish chieftains being overcome. So generous was he in permitting them to escape with their lives that they dubbed him *Cid* or *conqueror*.

Many a mission did the gallant knight perform for his king but the nobles at court were ever jealous of him, since none could compare with him in prowess and courage. The king consented to his marriage with Doña Ximena, and their two daughters were but children when Rodrigo incurred the enmity of King Alfonso, into whose ear tales to his discredit were continually poured by envious courtiers. Thereupon the Cid was banished from Castile, his estate confiscated and he allowed but nine days to depart ere his life would be forfeited. Sadly did he turn from the fair lands wherein his family had dwelt, leaving the care of wife and infants to the church.

“With tearful eyes he turned to gaze upon the wreck behind,
His rifled coffers, bursten gates, all open to the wind:
Nor mantle left, nor robe of fur; stript bare his castle hall
Nor hawk nor falcon in the mew, the perches empty all.”

His followers to the number of three hundred clung to their chief, but the people everywhere were warned that they would be blinded if they succored him or gave him entertainment. In shame those who had known him in his days of influence concealed themselves as he rode by.

“And loudly though his henchmen call, within no sound is heard;
No answer to their call; my Cid up to the threshold spurred,
His foot from out the stirrup raised and on the door smote hard;
It yielded not beneath the stroke, ’twas stout and strongly barred;
But from a chamber window high a damsel’s voice implored:
‘O thou that in a happy hour didst gird them with thy sword,
It is the order of the king; we dare not, O my lord!
Sealed with his royal seal hath come his letter to forbid
The Burgos folk to open door, or shelter thee, my Cid,
Our goods, our homes, our very eyes, in this are all at stake;
And small the gain to thee, though we meet ruin for thy sake.
Go, and God prosper thee in all thou shalt undertake!’
So spake the little damsel, and she hurried from the place.
Then knew my Cid no hope was left of King Alfonso’s grace.”

Having been bereft of all his worldly goods, it was necessary that he obtain funds for his undertakings among strangers. He bethought him of a trick whereby he might secure temporary relief, vowing to restore all that should be given him and more beside when fortune recouped him. He called a trusted henchman aside and confided his plan. Two empty coffers were procured and filled with golden sand.

The companion thereafter took them secretly to some rich Jews who loaned money at high interest. He represented them to be full of treasure and exacted a sworn promise that they would guard them well nor permit the covers to be raised until Rodrigo returned. Either these money lenders were unaware of the disfavor into which he had fallen or were indifferent to it. Ballads seldom concern themselves with consistencies. At any rate, the arrangement was quickly made and they received funds in abundance on such excellent securities.

He visited the monastery where his wife and babes had taken refuge and a touching farewell was said:

“The prayer was said, the Mass was sung, they mounted to depart;
My Cid a moment stayed to press Ximena to his heart:
Ximena kissed his hand, as one distraught with grief was she:
He looked upon his daughters: ‘These to God I leave,’ said he;
‘Unto our Lady and to God, Father of all below;
He knows if we shall meet again:—and now, sirs, let us go.’
As when the finger-nail from out the flesh is torn away,
Even so sharp to him and them the parting pang that day.
Then to his saddle sprang my Cid, and forth his vassals led;
But ever as he rode, to those behind he turned his head.”

He made war upon the Moors, no action being so sure to elicit approval from Spanish friends and foes alike. Even after he had defeated them and exacted heavy tribute from the king, they nevertheless mourned his departure when he set forth for new fields of adventure. To the king who had exiled him he invariably sent part of the spoils taken. This generous custom soon tended to alleviate the royal wrath. First free permission was given to any who cared to join in Cid’s forces; finally he was freely pardoned and invited to return to Castile.

Upon his restoration to court with all the booty his adventures had won for him, numerous suitors appeared for his daughters, who had meanwhile slipped from childhood. Two counts of Carrion pressed their suit and the king favored them. With some misgivings, Rodrigo consented to the double wedding. “Who can tell the great nobleness which the Cid displayed at that wedding! the feasts and the bullfights, and the throwing at the target, and the throwing canes, and how many joculars were there, and all the sports which are proper at such weddings!”

After the gaieties of the festival, the counts loitered long where gold was so plentiful. Presently the friends of Rodrigo observed lack of knightly qualities in these counts, who always managed to disappear if danger presented itself. A lion broke its bars and escaped from the menagerie which the great Rodrigo kept as one of the attractions of his princely estate. The counts, true to form, made haste to conceal themselves and confusion reigned until the Cid wakened.

“The good Cid awoke; he rose from sleep without alarm;
He went to meet the lion with his mantle on his arm.
The lion was abash’d the noble Cid to meet,
He bowed his mane to earth, his muzzle at his feet.
The Cid by neck and mane drew him to his den,
He thrust him in the hatch and came to the hall again.
He found his knights, his vassals, and all his valiant men.
He asked for the Carrion counts but they were missing again.”

Now the companions of the Cid began to joke about this episode to the discomfiture of the counts, who planned to take cowardly revenge, as might be expected of such ungal-lant creatures. They expressed desire to take their brides and depart to their homes. To this end Rodrigo loaded them with gifts, bestowing even his trusty swords upon them. After they had gone some little distance from the castle, the two villains maltreated the young daughters of the Cid, and left them to die alone in the forest, where they were discovered by a comrade of their father who had been suspicious of their good faith.

Angry at this outrage, Rodrigo appealed to the king, who summoned the miscreants to court. Obeying the royal summons, they pretended that the young women were not of sufficiently noble birth to be worthy of them. This was disproved by numerous offers of marriage that came directly from the scions of proud families. When challenged to fight, they were quickly overcome and exiled.

Finally when Rodrigo is old and death hovers near him, the Moors again begin aggressions. He instructs his wife and friends to equip him after his death in full armour as for battle, binding him on to his horse, declaring that his familiar figure will strike terror into the hearts of the Saracens, causing them to flee from the battlefield. And so it developed. The dead knight in his coat of mail rode through the battle ranks, calm, composed in the thickest of the fight. The enemy was thrown into confusion and the Christians were victorious.

Even that was not enough. For five years he sat in a figure. When one bolder than the rest determined to steal chair in the cathedral, none daring to approach the stern a ring from his finger, the hand moved to the hilt of the

sword and the thief hurried away in fear. Finally the body was interred, but, like the soul of old John Brown, his spirit still went marching on, inspiring his countrymen to brave deeds while they sang with pride of his heroic achievements.

THE CID PAWNS HIS COFFERS

Unto his trusty henchman Antoninez spake the Cid:
 "In faith and love I well do know thou'lt do as thou are bid:
 My gold is done, and silver, too; there's nothing left to spend;
 And now our broken fortunes thou shalt help us to amend.
 And first pray we that our device the good God will forgive,
 For harm to no man would we do—but noble knights must live!
 So we will take two goodly chests, covered with eramasie,
 Right richly dight with nails of gold, each locked with golden key,
 Fit for to hold a king's treasure (though treasure's what we lack),
 But with this golden sand right full these coffer we will pack;
 And when all safely they are lockt, and bolted tight and true,
 Do thou forthwith betake thyself to Vidas, the rich Jew;
 'Alas, good friends, my luckless evil state I sore bewail:
 An outlaw I, in peril sore, and wearied in my flight,
 Two chests well-heaped with treasure much distress me, day and
 night,

The king bemoans his loss, and I would ask to hide them here
 In pledge with ye, my trusty friends,—no longer need ye fear!" "

The faithful Antoninez bowed unto the Cid, and laughed:
 No word spake he, but ere he went, one stirrup-cup he quaffed:
 Then hied him on his Arab steed right swiftly to the Jews,
 Who greatly marvelled at his mien and eke at his strange news.
 He saith unto them privily: "I trust ye as my friends,
 For in this little matter we do compass mutual ends;
 Betray me to no Christian, nor yet to any Moor,
 And I'll make ye so rich, ye cannot make yourselves grow poor.
 My Cid the Campeador hath ta'en the tax-man's duty—
 Hath gathered in the king his name great store of golden booty,
 And yon two coffer that you see are crammed with glittering gold,
 Too weighty to be carried, so he wants them to be sold.
 Meanwhile he begs you hold them, and loan him what is fair
 Upon them: so come now with me, I'll place them in your care.
 But first, to seal our compact, and to safely screen us both,
 Give me your hands in mine, and swear a binding Hebrew oath,
 That ye will not these coffer ope, nor pry between their joints,
 For one clear year, or till such day as my true Cid appoints."

Then up spake eager Vidas:—"And how much will he pay
To me and Rachel here to keep these treasure-coffers—say?"

Saith Antoninez then, "My Cid will pay you in full measure
A guerdon that will swell your generous bosoms high with pleasure.
He needs one hundred marks this day, which ye shall give to me;
Or ride ye with me to him now; he gladly will ye see."

Then swift they mounted and away unto the Cid his tent:
He laughed a secret laugh as low these Jews before him bent;
His hand they kissed, and signed the bond which Antoninez penned,
That never lock should be undone, until a year should end.
Then back rode they, the Cid also, the money for to pay;
But first the Jews essayed those doughty coffers twain to weigh.
Then up spake Rachel,—“Campeador, a boon I crave of thee:
Wilt thou a fine red Moorish skin make gift of unto me?”

Quick quoth the Cid, “Most gladly I this gift to thee will offer;
But if perchance I should forget, then charge it on this coffer.”

And now upon the floor a gorgeous Bagdad carpet spread,
Whereon a spotless linen sheet was laid from off the bed,
And out upon the sheet did Vidas shining shekels pour,
Three hundred marks in silver, then three hundred gold ones more:
Six hundred marks those Jews held cheap against the Cid his
coffers,

Which Antoninez slowly picked and counted; then he proffers
This merry word,—“My service in this adding to your riches,
Deserves, methinks, a meed of thanks, if not a pair of breeches!”
“Here’s thirty marks,” quoth Vidas, “which we freely give to you;
And you can buy a fox-skin cloak and pair of breeches too.”

Then in high glee away hied Antoninez and the Cid,
And long and merrily they laughed upon the trick they did.
But soon the Cid his fortunes by successes did restore,
And then those Jews he paid in full, with a hundred marks more.

THE CID’S LAST COMMANDS

The Cid lay dying, slowly dying, two days would end his life;
He bade them bring Ximena, his well-beloved wife.
He called for Don Geronimo, for Alvar Fañez too,
Bermundez and Gil Diaz, his servant leal and true.
When all the five had gathered, and stood around his bed,
He looked at them with loving eyes, and thus he slowly said:
“Right well ye know the tidings, King Bucar is at hand,
With thirty kings and countless Moors, to take from me this land.
My last commands I give you, hear now what I’ve to tell:
When the breath has left my body, I pray you wash it well;

And take the myrrh and balsam, the Sultan's gift to me,
 And from the head down to the feet anoint it lovingly.
 And thou, my dear Ximena, and all thy women here,
 When I have gone and passed away, shed not a single tear;
 No sound of grief or wailing be heard within the hall,
 For if the Moors should learn my death much evil would befall.
 And when King Bucar marches with all his proud array,
 And plants his tents around the town, be joyful on that day.
 Send every townsman to the walls, as many as may be,
 And beat the drums and sound the horns, with shoutings and with
 glee.

And when ye all are ready to journey to Castile,
 Send secret message to your men, and keep the matter still.
 Let not a single Moorman in all the suburbs know;
 Collect your treasures every one, in readiness to go.
 Then saddle Bavieca with harness of the best,
 And place my body on his back, in seemly garments dressed;
 And fix it well and truly, that it may firmly stand;
 And let my sword Tizona be held within my hand.
 Let the Bishop Don Geronimo go forward at my side;
 And let the good Gil Diaz my Bavieca guide,
 And thou, Pedro Bermudez, do thou my banner hold,
 As thou hast nobly held it in many a fight of old.
 And thou, brave Alvar Fañez, go forth against the Moor,
 For though his hosts be wondrous strong, thy victory is sure.
 This boon hath Heaven granted in answer to my prayer;
 Thou shalt in triumph leave the field, with wealthy spoils and rare.
 I leave until to-morrow what more I have to say;
 And when to-morrow's sun hath set, I shall have passed away."



Cold, cold in death Rodrigo lay, the Cid of noble name;
 To do his master's last behest the good Gil Diaz came.
 He first embalmed the body, and wondrous was the sight;
 The face retained its beauty, with color fresh and bright.
 The eyes were wide and open, and comely was the beard;
 Of death there were no tokens, so life-like he appeared.
 He placed a board behind the back, and one upon the breast;
 And in his chair, both firm and straight, he left the Cid to rest.

Twelve days were gone; the men of war were ready for the
 fight,
 To chase King Bucar from the land, with all his men of might.
 They saddled Bavieca, and there at eventide
 They placed the dead Cid on his back, as he was wont to ride.

With dress and hose and armlets of colors black and white,
He looked as he was wont to be, when harnessed as a knight.
A shield, with waving proud device, did from his neck hang down;
A helm of painted parchment was planted on his crown:
It looked withal like burnished steel, wrought by a cunning hand;
And with his arm upraised he held Tizona, his good brand.

At dead of night, when all was still, the silent march began;
With stalwart knights, four hundred strong, Bermudez led the van;
He rode in front, with banner spread, the baggage came behind;
To guard its precious treasures four hundred were assigned.
Next came the body of the Cid in midst of all the train;
Upon his right the Bishop rode, Gil Diaz held the rein,
A hundred noble knights were round to guard the honored corse;
Ximena followed with her maids, and twice three hundred horse.
They seemed to be but twenty, so silently they passed;
And when they left the town behind, the day was breaking fast.

Now first was Alvar Fañez to hurry to the fight;
Against the power of Bucar and all his men of might;
When lo! a swarthy Mooress rode up to strike a blow,
Of gallant mien and cunning hand to draw the Turkish bow;
Her name it was Estrella, for like a star she shot.
Her shining darts that cleft the air, and never swerved a jot.
A hundred sisters black as night rode onward in her train;
They fought that day a gallant fight, but died upon the plain.

Amazed stood Bucar and his kings, to see the Christian throng;
Arrayed in shining robes, they seemed full seventy thousand strong.
But there was one of stately mien, that towered above the rest;
His charger white as driven snow, a red cross on his breast,
A banner white was in his hand, his falchion gleamed like fire;
And as he rode the Moormen down, he smote them in his ire.
A panic seized the Pagan ranks, to fight they had no mind;
King Bucar fled with all his kings, and left the field behind.
With hurry-scurry to their ships they every man did flee;
The Christians smote them hip and thigh, and chased them to the sea.

Ten thousand 'mid the waters sank, and many more were slain;
The rest embarked, and hoisted sail, and left the coast of Spain.

King Bucar found a safe retreat; there died full twenty kings;
The Cid's men captured all their tents, their gold and precious things.

The poorest men grew wealthy then, the rich were richer still;
With merry hearts they took the road, and journeyed to Castile.
Within Cardena's cloister, and in San Pedro's fane,
They laid the body of the Cid, who gave renown to Spain.



